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WHISPERINGS FROM THE HILLSIDE.

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Lawrence Reid
Falkland 1886

WHISPERINGS FROM THE HILLSIDE.

BY
ROBERT S. INGLIS.

WITH PREFATORY NOTE BY
REV. JAMES BELL, B.D.,
AUCHTERMUCHTY.

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PREFACE.

IT is not necessary now to apologise for the appearance of a volume of poems by one from the humbler ranks of life. Ploughboy and shepherd have long ere now proved their right, and have stood side by side with, if not far above, the more favoured of fortune who have cultivated the muses. The occupation of the shepherd seems peculiarly favourable to that converse with nature in her various moods which, in a contemplative mind, leads to the cultivation of the poetic faculty. Whether in the present case the productions of our shepherd's muse have attained to such a standard as to justify their appearance before the public in a printed volume, must now be left to that public to decide. Of this, meantime, we are sure, that their merit is such as to repay the trouble of the large circle of friends who desired, by their publication, to possess them in a permanent form.

Robert Stirling Inglis was born in the year 1835, near the head of Gala Water, in the parish of Heriot, and county of Midlothian. When about two years old, his parents removed to Outterstone, in the parish of Temple, where his father was engaged as shepherd. Here, in the neighbourhood of the Moorfoot Hills, his childhood was passed, and his schooling he got at Temple. The child of a poor shepherd, however, in those days, did not as a rule get even a fair chance at a country school. From the age of seven or eight

his attendance was very irregular, as he was needed at home, and at the age of twelve he had left his father's house to make way for himself. After that, he continued to follow the life of a shepherd in many and varied scenes. The year 1857 found him at Campsie, followed by three years at Fintry and one at Strathblane. At Gargunnock, in Stirlingshire, he remained two years, and then came to Brackland, near Callander. After three years spent there, and four at Aldie, near Methven, he came to Invermay, to the south of Perth. At the latter place he does not appear to have been comfortable, and after one year he came to Fife, to the farm of Rossie, near Auchtermuchty. In the course of his one year's stay he found his wife, and settled down with her on the farm of Falkland Wood, near Falkland, to take charge of the flocks of Mr B. A. Herdman. He remained in his cottage at Darnoe for eleven years, till November 1884, when, his health having given way, he was obliged to remove to the village of Newton. With a family of six to be provided for,—himself utterly helpless,—he trusted in Providence, and the self-denying labours of a devoted wife. Here for fully eighteen months he manfully strove to maintain a cheerful spirit, while disease was making slow progress towards the end. During the last few months his poetical activity revived, and to this period we owe some of the best of his poems. Those included under "The Shadow of the Tomb," fall almost wholly within it; some of them, such as "To a Blackbird," and "Somewhat Akin," shewing the longing of the caged bird for return to the freedom of earth and sky. But notwithstanding the hopes of friends, who at this time were trying to cheer him with the prospect of seeing his poems in a printed form, his malady assumed a severer shape, and terminated, on the 18th of June last, in his death.

As early as 1858 he had written verses worthy of preservation, and which found their way at the time

to the columns of an English newspaper. Wherever in his wanderings he has been following his vocation, he has preserved memorials in verse of his relations to persons and places. There are many pieces to shew that the heart was more than once engaged in the deepest passion of life. The sober reflex of deep and genuine piety which pervades the whole of his pieces, and the thoughtful, earnest vein which is found in the lightest of them, bear evidence to the worth of that influence he carried with him from the cottage home under the Moorfoot Hills. Towards the end especially he delighted to turn back to those scenes of early youth, and dwell on the home of childhood. "The Whinny Dell," "Maternal Sorrow," and "To the Memory of my dear departed Father," all of late date, shew how his heart turned warmly thither.

It is to be regretted that only within the last two months of his life did he attempt to write in his native dialect. The few poems which he then produced shew what might have been expected from him had his days been prolonged. The last theme which engaged his muse,—the poet Nicoll,—was suggested by recollections of what he had read of him, and a feeling of strong sympathy with a poet who had been cut down in his early prime, and in whom he seemed to trace a fate similar to his own. It was his dying hand which feebly traced that touching tribute to one of Scotland's sweetest singers. But regrets are vain,

> "His time was come,
> An' He who is the 'First an' Last,'
> Who rules the future an' the past,
> Has called him home."

It remains only to leave the volume to the candid regards of friends of the muses, and of those who delight to see humble merit make an effort towards a pure ideal. Besides the poems contained here,

there are many others in manuscript of early date, which are well worthy of seeing the light; but as the intention was not to publish all, but only such as would make an appropriate memorial volume, it was thought best to withhold them in the mean time.

Thanks are due to Mr George Maxwell, of the "People's Journal" office, who revised part of the manuscripts before they came into my hands, and also to all those who, by their encouragement and help, have aided in passing the volume through the press.

J. B.

AUCHTERMUCHTY, 15*th September* 1886.

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WHISPERINGS FROM THE HILLSIDE.

TO THE READER.

Good Reader! if you have but scanty time
From pressing duties, lay my scrawls away;
True, I have lightened with this rustic rhyme
Night's sleepless watching and the toilsome day.

And hours of weakness have not all been sad,
For out of self I've turned, and looked beyond
The present pressing trouble, and I've had
Much ground for hope, from good already found.

And I imagine that I now perceive
More beauty in the beautiful, and hear
More sweetness in the sweet, and try to give
More charity, where hitherto severe.

Oh! if we cherished more this heavenly grace,
Life would have fewer of its bitter woes,
And many a darkened, joyless, desert place
Would sing aloud, and blossom as the rose.

Now strive I to acquire a frame of mind
Becoming, and well fitted for the strain
Of soul and body, for too many find
That life is but a pilgrimage of pain.

And it behoves us while thus sorely pressed,
When hopes are fading and our friends grow few,
And we feel lonely in the cheerless mist,
Nor see one little sunbeam breaking through,

To hold on firmly, as the drowning hold
To floating spar, or torn and trailing shroud,
For soon the dayspring with her locks of gold
May look benignly on us through the cloud.

And bathing in her pure and placid light,
Our earthly journey we will move along,
Through deadly swamp, and o'er ungenial height,
Tho' weak in limb, with hearts full light and strong.

And as we chance to take a backward gaze
Along life's past and weary travelled road,
Shall we refrain from bursting into praise
Of highest rapture to our Father God?

Oh! shall it be that we will blush to own,
With deepest gratitude, His ceaseless care?
Blush to acknowledge what His love has done,
And still continue all His gifts to share?

I fain would stimulate my fellow-men
To reverent thought, for life's deep solemn tide
Flows swiftly onward, nor returns again,
But waits our coming on the other side.

HOME OF MY CHILDHOOD.

HOME of my childhood! still thou art
The one true pole-star, never lost,
Glowing in splendour all apart,
A very sun 'mid night's fair host.
Oft have I looked from out the strife,
To see thy guiding ray above,
And thou hast claimed thro' all my life
A something more than human love.

No miser ever hugged his gold
As I have cherish'd thoughts which came
Fresh from the shieling on the wold,—
I've idolised its very name.
All other longings were but cool,
Tame feelings, to this one pure source;
Like deep, broad river, ever full,
Unhindered in its seaward course.

Oh! mem'ry throws her tend'rest strings
Around that dear neglected spot,
And with a deathless yearning clings
Unto that lowly straw-roofed cot;
And by its cold forsaken hearth,
O'ergrown with rustling larch and fir,
She lingers aye, as if on earth
There were no other charm for her.

In prouder homes I may have been,
Where greater plenty heaped the board,
And fairer spots oft have I seen,
Where nature lavishly outpoured
Her summer wealth, and winter threw
A wilder grandeur to the storm;
But yet 'mong these I never knew
One other spot possess thy charm.

Plain, plain indeed, and what tho' mean!
A pure, deep-rooted faith uprose,
Which gave to every life within
A higher bent than rank bestows.
No false, impure, dark motive lay
Beneath one word, one look, or aim,
But godly thought had ample sway,
And holy was each tie and claim.

And as I daily near the shore
Of that one stream I cannot shun,
These longings but well up the more,
As springs grow pure the more they run.
And if at death I heir such love
As I have truly spent on thee,
No stormy passage shall me move
Upon that last oft-dreaded sea.

DOMESTIC LOVE.

Just as the little flower which grows
Hid in the grove from vulgar eye,
Whose slender leaflet never knows
The fierce light of the summer sky;
For stately beech and yew tree low
Are proud alike to nurse it there,
And o'er it their green shelter throw
From hot day winds and cold night air;

So would I now within the bower
Of love domestic wish to dwell,
For she can charm life's sunset hour
With purer joy than wizard spell.
A sweeter light is in her eye,
To cheer the lone and fearful heart,
Than ever glowed on western sky,
Or saw the summer day depart.

And soothing are the words which come
To stay us when we feel the weight
Of sorrows darker than the gloom
Upon the ebon brow of night.
But see! the leaden clouds uplift!
And from the clear blue sky above,
Streams down thro' many a precious rift
The bliss of pure Domestic Love.

FAITHFUL ROVER.

Men boast of friendship, and would fain
Have us believe that they are true,
But if they have no hope of gain,
Alas! the poor man's friends are few.

What tho'.they "scrape and beck and bow,"
And seem a saintly chosen race,
We see their flimsy cant out through,
And read the humbug in their face.

But thou wert faithful to the end!
Till time had come when we must part,
Yes, thou wert true—no human friend
Could equal thee—beast tho' thou art.

Tho' oft to thee unjust and rude,
With thy too anxious nature wroth,
I knew thy worth, for, oh ! I could
Have staked my life upon thy troth.

Dumb beast ! thy tireless energy
Was oft a marvel unto me,
And oft my heart grew big to note
Thy deep unflagging constancy.

Tho' I might scold and stamp and storm,
Who would have dared to harm one hair
Which lay upon thy faultless form,
Or blow his breath too roughly there ?

Unflinching ever, cold and wet,
Hunger and thirst, limbs hot and sore,
Ingratitude and angry threat,
These but brought out thy worth the more.

One little word, and all alert,
All life, and ready to obey;
One other sign, and off thou wert
To guard, or bring, or drive away.

Beneath the solemn starry sky,
Out in the cold and cheerless night,
Or when the summer sun shone high,
And all was quiet and delight,

Or when the moaning tempest broke,
And all creation stooped to hear,
As God in awful accents spoke,
Subdued, but waiting, thou wert near.

Thou patient beast, thou can'st not know,
Few human minds can understand,
How much it cost to let thee go,
And give thee to another's hand.

When with unsteady hand I knelt
To bind the cord around thy neck,
I somehow like a traitor felt,
And could have wished the cord to break.

Unselfish slave! was this thy due
For all those years of ceaseless care,
For love unswerving, deep and true,
When stiffened limb told age was there?

Was there no spare and cozy nook
Where thou could'st doze and dream at will
Enjoy a scratch without rebuke,
And challenge idle vagrants still?

Where thy too brief and busy day
Might glide serenely to a close,
And thy meek spirit pass away
To one long night of deep repose?

AN APPEAL TO HUMANITY.

An appeal to humanity, in behalf of starving, innocent Birds, or a protest against the shameful destruction, yea, the wanton waste, of happy harmless life.

"Know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."—ECCLESIASTES xi. 9.

OH! pity lend, and spare the warbling throng,
Nor Heaven's high mandate slight, "Thou shalt not kill."
Can these poor starving creatures do thee wrong?
Oh! if they could, would not the little ill
(Too oft supposed) which they may chance to do,
Be more than twice repaid, when they shall fill

Each little nook and greenwood thro' and thro',
When Spring and Summer days are fair and long,
With their right welcome notes of grateful song,
And all that minstrelsy be free to you?

When from a world of straining throats in Spring
Bright morn is hailed with universal song—
When every chorister which moves a wing,
With heart too full of love to hold his tongue,
Or cheered by hope's sweet flatteries must sing,
Oh! then, if they have harmed or done thee wrong,
When their glad notes make all the echoes sing,
Lone man! when worn and worried with thy cares,
Would not that sinless melody of theirs
Sweet solace to thy jaded spirit bring?

Yea, welcome as the summer sun and shower,
To all thy being would their warblings come,
For life's short day has many a joyless hour,
And darkening shadows fall on many a home.
And oft in little things lies mighty power,
For in the dark and stormy day, who knows
What languid hopes these slighted ones might raise,
Like to the tiny plant of moss which rose
To cheer the white man in his desert woes,
And fill his sinking soul with strength and praise,

And bear thee as on angel wings away
Where this dark strife of blood and death is not,
Where man assumes a higher dignity,
Nor stains his soul with this hell-branded blot,
But God-like steps he forth—in harmony
With all a wise, unerring love hath blessed,
And joyous made, with sinless life and light.
Then let no cruel thought pollute thy breast,
But faithful to thy trust let all exist,
Enjoying with thyself their true-born right.

We are their guardians now, for God hath placed
Those lonely creatures as it were in ward:

Then let not our high office be disgraced,
Their claims and mute appeals let us regard.
'Tis ours to lessen tho' we cannot heal
Much of the suffering which we meet below;
A joy the gen'rous soul can only feel,
A pleasure which no selfish heart can know,
Throughout the spirit's hidden springs will flow
To us when mindful of another's weal.

Behold, how happy in their woodland bowers!
To cheer and beautify were they not given?
With plumage lovely as the summer flowers,
And songs akin to echoes caught from heaven.
When winter storms come sweeping cold and hoar,
And from the leafless grove like waifs they're driven,
Oh! spare a crumb from autumn's garnered store.
We had their songs—then let us frankly give
Our little "odds and ends," and let them live
Unhurt and cared for, round our cottage door.

They were not sent to welter in their gore,
And glut the love of butchery and death.
That mystery sublime can we restore?
Can we give back the fragile fleeting breath?
We call it life, how little know we more
Than this? 'tis valued more than all beneath.
Then woe to him who ventures to deflower
Its sanctity, and who profanely toys
With God's first gift, yea, wantonly destroys
What he hath clothed in majesty and power.

THE POET'S POWER.

His is the deep, the mystic wondrous power,
Although embodied in a pigmy form,
Gentle at one time as the summer shower,
Then terrible as is the winter's storm;

Lashing the despot for his wilful wrong,
Filling the tyrant with a guilty dread,
Breathing the lover's plaint in touching song,
Or in sad measures wailing for the dead;
And whispering to the lady in her bower,
That she who follows virtue shall possess
Virtue's reward,—a more enhancing dower,
Than gold, or lands, or boasted loveliness.

IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE OF

AGNES INGLIS,

Who, after the brief space of two days' illness, died on the 8th of June 1877, aged 2 years and 6 months.

"She is not dead, but sleepeth."—LUKE viii. 52; Mark x. 14.

DEAR little loved one! like the tender flower
Whose day of bloom so swiftly steals away,
Like that brief beauty of the sunset hour,
Or insect fluttering in the noontide ray,
Thus fleeting was thy life! no earthly power,
Nor tend'rest tie, could bind thee here to stay;
Child of our love! in thy celestial bower,
Thy being now can never know decay,

But ever glowing with the deathless bloom
Of youth immortal; O much favoured one!
The dark, cold, lonely shadow of the tomb
Falls never on that home to which thou'rt gone.
To that fair land shall come no blight of time,
No drooping infant and no suff'rer's couch;
For death, the scourge of every earthly clime,
Lays not on one life there his icy touch.

We in our anguish have bewailed our loss,
Oh! weakness to begrudge thee this release,

Thine is the diadem without the cross,
Without the tearful strife, the holy peace;
And tho' we miss thee in thy little chair,
And feel a void no other form can fill,
We know thou'rt safe in our Great Shepherd's care,
Who bears the weak lambs in His bosom still.

And there, among those pastures ever green,
And by those living waters, thou shalt rest,
Till every little lamb be gathered in,
And every wandering sheep brought home to Christ.
And tho' we still must weep and toil below,
And face full many a struggle long and hard,
"Be faithful unto death," sweet truth we know,
The promised "crown of life" is our reward.

. . . . . .

It cannot be for nought that hearts are riven,
And those are taken from us whom we love;
Wise and compassionate the ways of Heaven,
And these to us in awful darkness move,
When left to feel that we are made to be
The playthings of some cruel destiny.

Near-sighted reason, to her wits' end driven,
Would toil in vain to solve the problem deep,
That work benign to her shall ne'er be given,
Now to make clear what God designed to keep,
In His own just inscrutable decrees,
From her proud vision deepest mysteries.

But this great truth we know if we are Thine,
Tho' darkest griefs our spirits overwhelm,
This ray of comfort like hope's star will shine,
Thy hand, O Gracious God! is on the helm,
And tho' thro' wildest storms we now be driven,
These but enhance to us the calm of Heaven.

TO CETEWAYO.

On seeing a representation of his humiliating condition in his approach to Sir G—— W——'s Camp.

MAN of powerful frame and "dusky mien"!
Child of nature, all unblest thou art!
Wearing round thee now the captive's chain,
And the poisoned arrows in thy heart.
Wronged and wronging, in that mingled feud
All were right, and not a soul was wrong,
Brave but beaten and at last subdued
By a foe who lacking much is strong.
Vain, alas! thine inartistic life,
Loose and rural roaming at thy will,
Vain to cope with, in the deadly strife,
All the pride and power of modern skill.
Fallen greatness! Oh! the glow of shame,
Did it spread thy swarthy features o'er?
Kingly glory! but the shadowy name
Left unto thee—not a vestige more.

TO A FRIEND ON MARRIAGE.

Miss A—— H—— to her friend Miss L ——on her marriage day, 21st November 1878.

"The bridal lights are gleaming."—CUNNINGHAM.

MY sister! if in human earnestness
There lie the virtue or the power to bless;
If in our supplications there be aught
To win the ear of Heaven, and to bring
From that great heart of love, an answer fraught
With choicest blessings from our gracious King;
And if in our short chequered lives there be,
As all must own there are, times when we need

For special duty special grace ; then we
With zealous energy must surely plead,
For how shall we have special gifts unless
We sue for these with special earnestness?

Not less auspicious will thy future prove
If on this eve of consummated love,
While others haste to join the bridal train,
One friend at least in the still privacy
Of her secluded chamber shall remain,
And with a sister's true soul-sympathy,
Surrounded by the soothing atmosphere
Of true humility, full of the sense
Of our great need, into the open ear
Of ever merciful Omnipotence
(Made sure by his own gracious guarantee
Of being heard) pour out her heart for thee.

Then granting that in these we be correct,
And as we sow to reap we may expect,
Oh! surely now may I with double zeal,
Without the slightest fear to give offence,
Petition Heaven for thy future weal,
And this is all I have of eloquence.
But where has been the secret of success?
The power which has achieved the noblest deed?
Has not the mainspring been in earnestness
Far more than birth, or wealth, or sect, or creed?
Yea, Genius—heavenward soaring—what is she
Without this fire sublime? A barren tree.
Tho' glad and hopeful on this joyous day,
My friend! I can be grave enough to pray,
That when you stand amid that solemn throng,
The object of much deep solicitude,
In this one virtue may your heart be strong,
And brave in the bright hope of coming good,
And let no evils which may never throw
Across your pathway their unpleasant gloom,
Intrude upon your quiet now—for know
'Tis soon enough to fight these when they come.

Be yours the hope which can anticipate
Always a brighter than the present state.

To-night the bride—the envy of thy peers,
With all the mingling of fond hopes and fears
In thy young breast; and who that e'er has stood,
The centre of attraction, as thou art,
Nerved by a superhuman fortitude
To play in that great drama one chief part,
Would not now freely give unsought to thee,
All which we have for trial or distress,
The heart's most tender, truest, sympathy,
The outflow of the soul's deep earnestness?
And these are God-like deeds done without show,
And gifts which cost us nothing to bestow.

May there descend upon you from above,
From the great depths of pure infinite love,
A pious trustfulness, as suiting best
This great momentous epoch of your life.
And in this step, Oh! mayest thou be blest
With pure exemption from untoward strife,
And may those mingled feelings which pervade
Your bosom upon such a time as this,
Like to the changing day at sunset, fade
Away into a world of peacefulness.
And may hope's pleasing blossoms yield, throughout
A long and useful life, abundant fruit.

In all sincerity to Heaven addressed,
Above all else shall be this one request:
Oh! may it be your happy lot to find,
In all your wand'rings thro' this wilderness,
That every pleasure you must leave behind
Is but the foretaste of a deeper bliss.
What to the perfect day has been the dawn,
What to the full blown summer was the spring,
Unto eternal good, this life when flown
Shall be the bright and blessed opening;
And breathing from my soul this wish for you,
My sister! will I bid you now —Adieu!

AFTER THE MARRIAGE.

WHAT I have sought for you, I crave for both,
For ye are one, by Heaven-attested oath.
Your partner, may the future be to him
Full of true good, and this is better far
Than the fair pictures of love's brightest dream,
Or the bright halo round hope's brightest star.
And gently strive to soothe his every care,
And to supply his wants your one great aim ;
And bear in mind, 'tis due that he should share,
Next to your God, your very first esteem.
As far as mortal can, be ye complete,
For him a heaven-sent, God-made " Helpmeet."

PREMONITION.

WHEN should mortals be afraid ?
When their hearts are beating lightest,
And their hopes are burning brightest,
Then they swiftly near the shade.
Should the dreamer's golden morrow
Come at all, 'twill come with sorrow
And with suffering thick o'erlaid.

POTENCY OF FAITH.

AND what is our short life below,
But storm and calm alternately ?
The ocean's constant ebb and flow,
The shifting scene incessantly,
The morn of hope, the day of toil, and then
The night-fall comes o'erfraught with blight and pain.

And how we long, 'mid all this strife
  Of care and bitter jealousies,
For that serener, purer life,
  That state of greater perfectness,
That unity of heart and mind and soul,
Which makes the heavenly world one happy whole.

Oh ! what a complication is
  Our nature ; must it always be
Thus full of inconsistencies,
  Yearning, yet fearing to be free ?
With its deep longings, lacking fortitude,
As if our hearts and hands were stained with blood.

If the pure simple faith were ours,
  That honest unperverted trust,
Which the fair child with his young powers
  Possesses fully from the first,
We would not thus be doomed to bear about
Those burdens of anxiety and doubt.

And why this want of confidence ?
  This wooing of uneasiness ?
The love of that which common sense
  Ought to discard ? Surely it is
Degrading to the manhood God has given,
To live upon, yet disbelieve in, heaven.

Or is it in us a deep sense
  Of our own worthlessness, that we
Lack power to trust Omniptence ?
  And this is weakness great, for see
The care and sorrow which we court thereby,
And comfort lose, God meant us to enjoy.

His is a treasure none need scorn
  (However proud of noble line),
Who by his simple faith upborne
  Takes firmly hold of the Divine,
And tho' scarce able, from his meagre store
Of learning, to say why, yet feels secure.

Ample enough the light which shows
The one right pathway thro' the night,
And wise enough is he who knows
To husband his brief span aright.
Better with little light to find the way,
Than have abundance and yet go astray.

THE CAPTIVE LARK.

"Thy prison song, O bird beloved,
My heart hath strangely, deeply moved."
JANET HAMILTON.

I PASSED along the crowded street,
And wondered much to hear thee sing
Thy own wild notes so clear and sweet,
Not like a cramped imprisoned thing;
And yet I thought that song might be
Thy last appeal for liberty!

So full of tenderness, and still
With all thy native beauty fraught,
Graceful as when, above the hill,
By nature only wert thou taught
To sing and soar, and soaring sing,
The sweetest minstrel of the spring.

As gushing from thy little throat
The wild notes came, a bitter pang
Crept o'er my spirit, for I thought
These more with plaint than pleasure rang,
And blending, yet distinct and strong,
An answering call rung in thy song.

With ready ear, Oh had you caught,
Tho' singing in that thoroughfare,

Some well-known sounds the breeze had brought
From old companions passing near?
Or noting them with upward glance,
You gave their song that quick response?

And as a random word let fall
In lonely hearts will often find
An echo deep, did these recall
A time when thou wert unconfined?
When thou could'st soar as free as they,
And sing to heaven thy morning lay?

A time when crimson heath-bells rung
Their "merry moorland chimes" to thee?
When crystal streamlets far among
Their own wild mountain scenery,
Or flowing on thro' fertile plains,
Murmured to thee their sweetest strains?

And lo! my thoughts were borne away
To green hillside and brake of fern,
Where peacefully the grey mist lay
In silvery folds around the cairn,
And there in that lone spot I heard
Another sing—no captive bird,

But free,—and as he raised his crest,
Drew up his limbs and spread his wing,
And shook from off his speckled breast,
The dew-drops back upon the ling,*
Oh! happy bird! my spirit sighed,
If I could thus fling cares aside.

Yes, free, and as he rose from earth,
"'Bove morning cloud and mortal ken,"
He looked a bird of heav'nly birth,
And sung at heaven's portal then,
Still, like the heav'n-sent shower of rain,
To earth came back the sweet refrain.

*Common heath.

As up thro' ether fields he rose,
If his sweet song appeared to wane,
'Twas but as in the distance grows
More mellow music's powerful strain ;
For still he sung, tho' lost to sight
Amid the morning's sweetest light.

And was not his a princely lot,
In that "bright region of the sun"?
Thro' summer's calmest sky to float,
And when his song of peace was done,
Drop from the "blue expanse," to press
The fair flowers of the wilderness.

Bright soaring bird ! what cares could touch
His sinless heart those clouds among !
God spread for him his heath-bell couch,
And taught to him his beauteous song,
And bade the hill and streamlet nigh
His few and simple wants supply.

—o—

ALBUM VERSES—WANTED.

WANTED, some good man's better son,
In whom I may confide,
Whose heart with mine will beat at one,
While walking by my side.

One whose dark eye can read in mine
What words may not express ;
Whose every feature is benign,
And full of loveliness :

One who with sagest counsel may
My every step direct ;
And winning gently day by day,
A maiden's deep respect :

A stately youth with powerful arm,
On which my own may rest,
To shield me in the time of harm,
And fold me to his breast;

One fully skilled the helm to guide
On life's unsettled sea;
One to be bridegroom, while I'm bride:
Say, will you not be he?

—o—

WOMAN.

Written after reading Byron's ungallant lines on "Woman."

"Thy soft hand amid the maze of ill
Can rear one blissful bower of Eden still."

BERESFORD.

O WOMAN! that first soothing lullaby
Beside our cradle-bed by thee was sung,
And thou hast listened with a beaming eye
To the first lispings of our infant tongue,
And to our first weak steps thy hand has lent
Its gentle succour and encouragement.

And in our youthful waywardness we still
Have felt upon us thine own kind restraint,
Nor flung its well meant thraldom off, until,
Hardened by contact with stern life, and bent
On our own pleasure, we perchance have then
Broke loose, and brought to thee long years of pain.

Yet the returning prodigal has found
In thy deep soul of love no bitter part,
But full forgiveness there—ere he has owned
His many faults—outwelling from thy heart;
And yet, for all thy deep devotedness,
The recompence has been the false one's kiss.

Not only by the cradle, our first bed,
Where sleeps the child unconscious of thy love,
But when the day's bright sunlight all has fled,
And twinkling stars keep silent watch above,
Then, all unmindful of thy fading bloom,
Thy loving vigils light the midnight gloom.

Milder in word, and lighter far in touch,
Than cold and formal lordly man, thou art;
Thy ceaseless labours by the sick one's couch
Bring hope and healing to the sinking heart;
And well might all thy works and words benign
Bind with a lifelong tie our souls to thine.

Beside the nuptial altar, and beside
The mourner as he weeps above the bier,
Angel of mercy, lo! the trembling bride
Takes courage as she feels thy presence near,
And the crushed mourner in thy hopeful eye
Reads something of that brighter life on high.

And welcome art thou to the scene of strife
By weary war-worn soldier—far away
From that plain cottage home, where his young life
Passed calmly by—as tranquil summer day,
Whose sunshine, like thy love, so free to all,
We little prize till gone beyond recall.

To bind the bleeding sword-cut, and to raise
The prostrate head a little from the sod,
And point the parting spirit thro' the haze
Of earthly mists, to our great Father God,
And whisper to the youth with shattered limb
Of weary hearts at home still true to him.

And oh! unselfish woman, when the last
Of all life's tiresome buffetings are o'er,
And on our lot that solemn die is cast,
Which friend or foe can alter nevermore,
Thou art the first to mourn, the last to blame,
And fastest, truest friend to guard our fame.

Alas ! that genius, with her laurel wreath
And nobler mission, should have stained the lyre,
And thus ungallantly have stooped to breathe
One heartless syllable, yea, scornful ire,
Against that being who was meant to share
Man's tend'rest love, and soothe his deepest care.

And her deep love ye were not born to know
Who deem it but a subtle scheming art ;
The purest incense which can burn below,
Upon the altar of the human heart,
Yea, glow the brighter for the sorer test,
Is the devotion of true woman's breast.

——o——

CHANCE MEETING.

And we have met, only to part,
The name we only met to know,
And none of those dear joys which start
When eye meets eye with kindly glow ;
Nor feel that pure ecstatic thrill,
Which strikes the bosom's inmost core,
And trembles on each chord, until
We sigh for those we shunn'd before ;
But, hush ! oh, may no feeling of regret
Be ours that we to part have only met.

——o——

SELF-DISCIPLINE.

Be calm, proud spirit, fret thou not ;
Display thy majesty, and quell
The rising of unmanly thought,
Nor like the peevish child rebel ;
In meekness only wilt thou triumph and excel.

Thou knowest not thine own great power—
Oh! if thou did'st, no petty thing,
No grief nor pleasure of an hour,
Would raise too high, nor too much sting.
In meekness only wilt thou rise and reign a king.

—o—

FAREWELL!

FAREWELL! O sinner, when you have
Gathered together all your hours of pain,
All one might bear this side the grave,
These only would appear one tiny grain
Compared with that deep suffering none can tell,
When one lost spirit shrieks to hope—Farewell!

—o—

A HERO ALL BUT CROWNED.

These lines were suggested by the pleasing account of the unshaken yet lowly confidence, the calm child-like trust, and happy state of mind, in daily expectation of death, exhibited by the Rev. J. W.

THERE is a feeling which the poet's pen,
A glory which the painter's powerful art,
But dimly shadow forth—that feeling when
The spirit of the good man would depart,
Which fills with solemn awe the lightest heart.

And whether lord or peasant, this is he
Who having now of self-reared refuge none,
And coming only with this powerful plea,
This pass with signature of blood thereon,
The finished work of God's Incarnate Son.

And as the closing scene of life draws nigh,
A long life spent in pleasing harmony
With all most lovely underneath the sky,
And most desirable that we should be,
Fraught with the spirit of consistency,

Have ye, while waiting for the last low breath
Of such, thrilled by the deep, deep hush around,
And witnessing the triumph of his faith,
In the calm mien of sweet assurance found,
Not thought him then a hero all but crowned?

For I have thought that he was greater then,
And nobler far than he had been before,
Oh! could it be that o'er this prince of men
Whom we would almost venture to adore,
There hung the glory of the unseen shore?

A glory brighter than resplendent glow
Of dazzling sunbeams in fair summer hours,
And odorous as perfumed winds which blow
Thro' groves of incense and sweet, fragrant flowers,
And holier than aught in earthly bowers.

And downward thro' that star-gemmed avenue
(The pathway to the dwellings of the blest),
There streams that glory of angelic hue
Encircling with its halo our loved guest,
And thus our brother enters on his rest.

And may there not to us thro' him be given,
An earnest of that blissful rest above?
A foretaste of the soothing peace of heaven?
Grant, O Eternal Spirit! such may prove
To us an everlasting link of love.

A link by which our spirits evermore,
In one unbroken union, will be bound,
A holy guard of love, until we soar
Time's trying toils and tempests far beyond,
And greet our brother there a Hero crowned.

LINES

Supposed to be written by Mrs G—— A——, on the recovery of the body of her son Joseph, from the Tay Bridge disaster, after four months' tossing about in the restless deep.

> "And all that love hath lost on earth,
> May yet be found in heaven."
>
> FRANCES BROWN.

AND thou hast given up to me my child,
As if o'ercome with living sympathy,
Back from the heaving of thy billows wild,
And from thy troubled, gloomy depths, O sea.

Sore have I longed, and it was needless pain;
For in thy keeping many a long mourned one
Lies safe, ah! never more to come again,
Till hoary time's long course of years be run.

Yes, in thy deep and sunless caves there sleep
The loved, the good, and beautiful, but known
To Him whose ceaseless love and care shall keep
Unhurt the sacred ashes of His own.

Yet I had yearned to rescue from thy hold,
Tho' but the lifeless body still to me,
'Twas dearer than thy freight of sunken gold,
Or all the wealth of thy vast treasury.

How little knew I that the fair-haired boy
Who nestled in my bosom would thus be,
Yea, while a father's hope and mother's joy,
A plaything for thy briny surf, O sea!

And yet in mercy, O my God! not wrath,
Thou did'st this sorrow of my life conceal;
Thy gracious providence hath marked my path,
Tho' with a stricken heart this day I kneel.

And hope would whisper, Tho' thus rudely torn
From all his sweet young life had prized below
Beyond time's shore there breaks a brighter morn,
Illumed by life and love's unfading glow.

An endless day, with no dark night behind,
Spread o'er a land unmarred by sin's foul stain,
Where blest immortals evermore shall find
Eternal joys for passing earthly pain.

Sickness and death and sad farewells have there
No meaning; and the silent, tearless throe
Of agony, our spirits oft must bear,
No dweller in that happy land shall know.

Farewell, my child! we leave thee now to sleep,
Near to thine own loved home we lay thee down,
And grateful feel, tho' these sad tears we weep,
That now thy fate and resting-place are known.

—o—

MY INSIGNIFICANCE.

Oh! I am only one of the great mass
Of weary toiling mortals—only one!
What tho' I sink exhausted on the grass,
Or on this stony pathway here alone!
What tho' the night wind and the drenching rain
Chill this poor tenement of skin and bone!
And these tired aching limbs move not again
To further drag this weary body on!
'Twould only be one leaflet from the bough;
One sand grain drifted from the ocean shore!
Or withered grass blade from the mountain brow!
As countless human lives have been before!
True, I am worthless and of little note,
But why so sensible of all this woe;
Why are these agonies so nicely wrought
Into my spirit's being thro' and thro'?

Cold is the prospect o'er yon cloud-wrapt hill,
The storm fiend grumbles in the gloomy west,
But thoughtless man's neglect is colder still,
And pierces deeper far this lonely breast.
How many trav'llers on life's uphill road
Like me this night plod wearily along!
Who fain would rest—faint with the double load
Of toil and age uncheered by smile or song.

—o—

TIME.

TIME, like arrow swift, is speeding,
Nothing can its progress stay;
Whate'er be the life we're leading,
Unperceived it steals away.

Ever coming, ever going,
Nothing heard upon its stream,
Not a murmur with its flowing,
Soft and silent as a dream.

Sleeping never with the sleeper,
Passing on by night and day;
Ripening all for death, the reaper,
Poor and wealthy, grave and gay.

Bringing bud and bursting blossom,
Spreading leaf and leaves grown sere;
Bringing sorrow to the bosom,
Childhood's smile and manhood's tear.

Herald both of pain and pleasure,
Glowing hope and chilly fear,
Bearing gain and bearing treasure
To and from us mortals here.

Full of warning, and devotion,
Bidding sinners cease to spurn;
Bearing all to that great ocean,
Whence there can be no return.

WHY ENVY THE WEALTHY AND THE GREAT?

THE rich and great, why envy them,
As if they might no sorrow know?
The head which wears a diadem
Wears also lines of care below.
It was not in the wilderness,
But with a crown upon his head,
King David felt his worst distress,
And wept the saddest tears he shed.

Ah! beardless stripling, when the brook
Refreshed thee with its limpid stream;
When nature lay an open book,
And nature's God the central theme;
When thy sweet harp gave to the breeze
Which swept Judea's arid plain,
Its rapt and heaven-born ecstasies,
And many a spirit-soothing strain;

No lust, nor hate, nor jealousies,
With all their fierce internal strife,
Undid thy native rural peace,
Nor marred thy pure and simple life.
Yea, robber band and beast of prey,
And pleasant calm and sweeping storm,
Bright starry night and busy day,
For thy great future braced thy form.

I'd rather dwell where summer smiled
Upon a pathless solitude,
And winter sternly grand and wild
Swept frowning height and moaning wood,
Than mingle 'mong the spiteful throng
Who, full of gloomy discontent,
Profanely deem their Maker wrong,
And grudge the good to others sent.

Better for many had they heard
No music but the gushing rill,
No songster save the little bird
Among the brackens on the hill.
Remote from haunts of crime and strife,
More baneful far than fever's breath,
They might have lived a blameless life,
And died a happy, hopeful death.

Sigh not for grandeur, it may bring
Sorrows which number twice its joys,
The crown and sceptre of a king
Are nothing more than idle toys.
Then let no love inordinate,
No thirst of power, distract thy soul;
Strive to be good, and thou art great,
For worth alone can reach the goal.

—o—

VERSES

Supposed to be written by Mrs R—— B——, on the loss of her brother, one of the workmen employed on the *Daphne*, and went down when that ill-fated vessel capsized, and caused such a loss of human life.

"And the sweet word brother wakes a wish
To turn aside and weep."

Alas! my brother, in this distant home,
Far from the scenes of youth and our own hearth,
Bright glimpses of our early days now come,
Those days unclouded by the gloom of earth.

For we were free of care, and happy then,
The melody of all glad things was ours,
The song bird singing in the green-wood glen,
And sweet young voices 'mong the leafy bowers.

And all that nameless loveliness which glows
'Neath summer's wondrous power on field and fell,
Or those more pleasing tints fair autumn strews
O'er woodlands broad, rich plain, and rugged dell.

Yea, beautiful beneath her robe of snow,
As stainless childhood 'neath the mystic touch
Of that dread angel Death, more friend than foe,
Lay worn-out nature in her wintry couch.

Oh! whither have those joyous moments fled,
Which flitted round the dawn of thy short day?
Bright as the sunrise on the mountain head,
Sweet as the deep calm of the evening grey?

Gone like the golden fringe from off the cloud,
Which waved a welcome to the new day's birth,
Or like the bow—our childhood strangely proud
To see run round the sky, and rest on earth.

Gone! thou did'st leave us, ere the pleasing thrill
Of full grown man was in thy pulse's play;
When youth's fair light and softest whispers still
Floated and shone around thee night and day.

Gone ere one cherished hope was realised!
Not as the workman hoar, with labour done,
Lies down to his sweet rest, when all he prized
Has been enjoyed, save heaven, and it is won.

How briefly told the story of thy life,
And deeply mournful was its tragic close!
No weary waiting, and no painful strife,
No feverish longing for unfound repose.

Swift as the lightning from the thunder cloud,
Yea, startling as the fiery bolt of death,
Down sunk that eager unsuspecting crowd
Into the bosom of the flood beneath.

And tender forms were in that hapless throng,
The loving and the loveable, and they
Who toiled in life's great mart, earnest and strong,
The young wife's guardian, and the widow's stay.

And what bright hopes were crushed in that brief space,
What fair built plans laid prostrate 'neath the foam!
And many a kindly heart and love-lit face
Returned no more to bless their joyless home.

Silent and sad, our widowed hearts repair
Within grief's sacred shade to mourn thy loss,
Not to arraign our God, but wrestle there,
To carry patiently this God-sent cross.

——o——

PIETY A PRIVILEGE.

When morning dawns, and thou'rt awake,
Ere ever thou hast walked abroad,
Ere thou hast planned what course to take,
Go, bow thy soul before thy God.

Deem it no task, how mad the thought!
It is a privilege most dear,
An exercise which oft has brought
God and salvation very near.

——o——

MATERNAL SORROW.

Beside our old, old home I see thee now,
Departed Mother! and the evening psalm
Has not been sung; Oh! why that shaded brow,
And those sad eyes, and all around so calm?

'Tis summer, and the busy toil-fraught day
Is fading unawares from wood and hill,
And queenly night spreads wide her robe of grey
O'er fragrant meadow, and o'er tinkling rill.

And why, amid night's soothing atmosphere,
And those rich dews of heav'nly peace which come
The jaded spirit to refresh and cheer,
Is thy poor heart so filled with fear and gloom?

For not one jarring sound is heard to pain
The few, few listeners by our cottage door;
Betimes the lamb's low bleat comes o'er the plain,
Or moor-hen's anxious brood-call on the moor.

But thou art sorrowful, as is the bird,
When hand unpitiful has robbed her nest;
And with sad wonderment my heart is stirred,
My boyish heart, to see thy sore unrest.

Ah, mother! thro' long years 'twixt then and now,
Thy little wondering boy has learned to know
What thought of bitterness o'erhung thy brow,
And wrung thy heart that evening long ago.

Oft has my fancy, with a strange delight,
Left other scenes, and there all lonely stood,
And the sad drama of that summer night
Most vividly and faithfully reviewed.

And never, mother! till my heart is cold,
And I have met thee in our home above,
Will that fair beauty of thy life grow old,
That lovely picture of maternal love.

——o——

TAKE COMFORT.

TAKE comfort, ye fearing,
Look upward and smile,
That bright day is nearing,
Which closes your toil.
The heaven stretched o'er ye,
So lovely at night;
That fair land of glory,
With gems shining bright;
That home where the weary,
With trials tossed sore,
Those ones you love dearly,
Will rest evermore;
That place where each pleasure
Unfading endures,
With every wished treasure,
May one day be yours:
Then shrink not from trouble,
Nor tremble at death,
This life's but a bubble,
Which bursts at a breath,
And death to each mortal,
To that land from this,
For righteous is portal,
Sole gateway to bliss.

——o——

RETROSPECTION.

OH! sweetly, as in days of yore,
A stone-cast from our cottage door,
The mountain stream is singing still;
And by its mossy banks we hear

The same soft lullaby we heard
Long ere the leaf was stained and sere,
When joyous as the summer bird,
Which knows so well the time of flowers,
Of shady groves and pleasant bowers,
Our hearts beat time to that same rill.
Oh! happy days when we were young,
Our cares were light, our limbs were strong,
Above, below, and all around,
Then every sight was beauty crowned,
And every sound was musical.

—o—

THE EARLY DEAD.

Oh! wert thou fearful of the longer race
Of life's stern fighting, and its tears and pain?
Its ceaseless planning, and its fevered chase
Thro' toil and drudgery to find no gain,
That thus the reaper came at break of day,
And from earth's chequered lot bore thee away?

And tho' the lovely spring days soon will bring
Fair flower and songster both to mead and hill,
And thou dost hear no earthly warbler sing,
A brighter beauty and diviner thrill,
From fadeless flower, and joy's celestial strain,
Is ever thine, without one touch of pain.

And could we better catch this pleasing truth,
And hold it firmly in our fearful heart!
That thou art blooming in immortal youth,
And of the world of light a living part,
A conscious being still, and now possessed
Of all to make a thinking being bless'd.

Thy life was but a dream, a gleam of light,
A joyous echo which has passed away;
As lustrous star upon the brow of night,
Still there, tho' seen not 'mid the light of day,
Art thou above us, tho' we see thee not,
To draw us upward in our every thought;

And thro' some hidden channel dost convey
Thy powerful, loving stimulus to cheer
Our flagging spirits on their heav'nward way;
And when we step aside, wilt thou be near,
Like an attendant angel pure and good,
To woo us back to happy rectitude?

Oh! why did light illuminate thine eye,
And all life's tender longings fill thy heart,
If thou wert only born, fair child, to die,
And of the senseless earth become a part,
And find the grave thy spirit's utmost bound,
And no bright state of happiness beyond?

And we are troubled while we think of thee,
So suddenly from our bright hearth removed!
Oh! but our hearts have smarted bitterly;
Till thou wert gone, we knew not we had loved.
'Twas like an unknown hidden spring, until
We saw thee on that evening lie so still.

—o—

ALL MIND ME OF THEE.

Not a bird can sing, but sings of thee;
Not a breeze can blow but brings
Some of thy whisperings back to me,
On its soft and fairy wings.

Not a flower can bloom, but, lo! thy smile
Is seen in its every charm;
Not a sunbeam shine, but all the while
It portrays thy angel form.

Not a song is sung, if it be of love,
But I hear thy secret sigh;
Not a bright star beams in heaven above,
But I see thy sparkling eye;

Not a dream have I, but there thou art,
And doubly fair art thou:
The life and idol of my heart,
To thee I spell-bound bow.

——o——

INNOCENCE.

LIKE some power from heaven down bending,
Shielding with an unseen arm,
Thee from evil ones defending,
Innocence will guard from harm.
Who will dare to trample o'er it?
Who will soil so pure a thing?
Basest thought has shrunk before it,
Like a traitor 'fore a king.

——o——

"*THERE IS REST IN HEAVEN.*"

TOSSED on life's tempestuous ocean,
Comfort gone, and courage low;
Trembling oft with deep emotion,
'Reft of hope's consoling glow,
'Mid the trying, wild commotion,
'Mid the ceaseless ebb and flow
Of the suffering, sin, and woe
Of this weary life below;
Should the loss of dear ones grieve me,
Those who soon, alas! must leave me,
Those who loved me long ago,
Those who heard my earliest weeping,
Those who watched me soundly sleeping

In my little cradle bed :
When, like childhood's joys all fled,
They are sleeping with the dead ;
When the sacred pledge is broken,
And I stagger 'neath the blow
Which a former friend has given,
Worse than basest falsehoods spoken
By a sworn and open foe ;
When my lonely heart is driven
By wild tumults "to and fro,"
Whither would I turn mine eye,
Or my homeless spirit fly,
Knew I not of rest in heaven ?

THE CHILD AND THE STREAM.

(A Fragment.)

It was not when the goddess of the woods
Tasselled with crimson and with silver buds,
Fresh from the breezy, bracing days of March,
The lowly willow and the graceful larch ;
Nor was it when the gladsome month of May
Shone on the verdant mead and hawthorn spray,
And twined in her delightful woodland bowers
Her countless wreaths of fairest tinted flowers ;
Nor when the fiercer shining light of June
Burned in the glare of an oppressive noon,
When not a sluggish zephyr deigned to stir,
And cool the over-heated labourer ;
Nor when the jocund, easy-going swain
Drove to the shearing pen his fleecy train,
When thro' the pleasing, soft, grey light of morn,
The gay lark sung above the shooting corn ;
But when good Ceres with her sickle came,
Joy in her look and vigour in her frame,
And humming to herself, full sweet and low,
A harvest ditty lilted long ago ;—

Just then it was—and then on such a day,
When all is pleasant, but not over gay,
When gentle peace, calm, soothing, and benign,
Fills earth and air with harmony divine,
When o'er the weary mind and soul of grief,
There floats the blessed spirit of relief,
Stood on a rustic bridge, where one could trace
A happy, puzzled look upon his face,
A joyous look of youthful wonderment,
Or infant joy and infant wonder blent.
And there he stood, as childhood only may,
Graceful and easy as the fabled fay,
A fitting hero for the poet's lay.
There, as he skipt about, his little feet
Seemed in my troubled bosom to repeat
A distant, but an unforgotten beat.

—o—

THE LOVE OF HOME.

THERE is a land, the best
  Of all the lands we view,
A place of sweeter rest,
  And dearer friendships too ;
Go wander where you may,
  From pole to pole go roam ;
In other lands, ah ! say,
  Is there one spot like home ?

What though 'mid fragrant flowers,
  Of softest, richest hue,
Which blush in foreign bowers,
  You rove the whole day through :
Beneath a foreign sky,
  Tho' in some lordly dome,
Will you e'er know the joy
  Which you have known at home ?

What smile is half so sweet,
Tho' oft bedimmed with tears?
What friends will you e'er meet
Like those of youthful years?
Who to thy dreaming bed,
Of all the host which come,
Is half so welcome made,
As some dear one from home?

The exile far away,
Now browned by sunny climes,
His locks grown few and grey,
The wreck of former times,
With longings strong and deep,
Looks o'er the wild sea foam,
And prays he yet may sleep
Within his own loved home.

The mariner afar,
Tossed on the ocean wave;
Amid the ranks of war,
Where die th' unyielding brave:
There,—in that tempest song,
There,—in that battle gloom,
One passion still is strong,
The love, the love of home.

Through all the scenes of life,
Whatever these may be,
Be they dark hours of strife,
Or bright serenity,
Oh! this thou knowest well,
Wherever thou shalt roam,
Deep in thy soul shall dwell
The quenchless love of home!

——o——

CHILDHOOD'S HOME.

WHAT place so fair as childhood's home !
Though in some lonely dell,
Far, far away from spendid dome,
And chime of Sabbath bell.

Beneath some rock, whose towering peaks
Seem cleaving cloud and sky,
Where nought the dreary stillness breaks,
But the wild raven's cry.

Though there few luxuries are found,
And wintry storms beat sore,
And rough the grandeur all around,
For these we love it more.

We love the old and crumbling cairn,
The torrent's reckless dash,
The blooming heath and plumed fern,
And tasselled mountain ash.

But better far we love the tones
Of words which echo yet,
Words spoken by those honoured ones
We never will forget.

Oft will our yearning memories hear,
With deepest reverence fraught,
Those counsels whispered in our ear,
The counsels which they taught.

And we again shall think we kneel
Beside our little bed,
And with emotion seem to feel
Soft hands laid on our head.

ON A STAG

Leaving all his pursuers, flying from his native forest, and dying of his wounds.

Poor, timid creature! like the steed,
Whose speed outstrips the stormy wind,
Thou didst, o'er highland heath and mead,
Leave thy pursuers far behind.
But in that sinless breast of thine
Thou borest the envenomed wounds,
Which doomed thee here awhile to pine,
Then die, but die not by the hounds.

When wounded sore, and sorely prest,
And struggling hard against the breeze,
Did they at thy fine dappled chest,
With yawning jaws, attempt to seize?
Perhaps adown thy face so meek
The tears of anguished nature ran,
And told the woes thou could'st not speak,
Unpitied, yet all caused by man.

Oft hast thou in the quiet bower
Of wild Glen Artney's hazel dell,
Rested the summer noonday hour,
Then sought again thy native fell.
Unfettered through the dewy grass,
'Twas thine in sportive mood to roam,
And skip along the mountain pass,
And breast the torrents white with foam

Lord of the forest, with a pace
Majestic as a prince thou'd'st stray
Across Ben Voirlich's rocky face,
Where Earn's 'deep waters' neath thee lay.
Then southward, on through many a brake,
And through the Trossachs' pathless wood,
Downward by Katrine's far-famed lake,
Where Helen's rustic cottage stood.

Oh! why did tyrannising man,
With care thee as his fav'rite bless?
Unmanly deed! ignoble plan!
To be amused at thy distress.
Timid, yet yielding not to one
Who, with destructive, cruel aim,
Levelled at thee the fatal gun,
And proudly thought the prize to claim.

Wrenching asunder every tie,
Which bound thee to thy native glen,
Thou sought'st the distant vale to die,
Far from thy foes, half-heathen men;
And now, for ever from them free,
Thou'lt rest in this sequestered spot,
And to preserve thy memory,
Thy horns will grace my rural cot.

——o——

MY CLOCK.

Emblem of the flowing river,
Type of mine own pulse's beat,
Thou art ticking, ticking ever,
In thy hermit, still retreat.

Useful thing! thou tellest truly
All the hours which pass away,
And from slumber call'st me duly
To the labours of the day.

Every moment thou art telling,
Brings its own important weight:
That long list of seconds swelling,
I have failed to use aright.

Every stroke thy hammer giveth
Rings the death-knell of some heart,
Telling every one who liveth
To be ready to depart.

And perchance thou still wilt measure
Time by minutes o'er and o'er,
When I've gone where that great treasure
Will be parcelled out no more.

—o—

MUSINGS IN THE NIGHT.

THE day has gone, gone from the earth and sky,
And night, deep, solemn, calm, majestic night,
Crowned with her blue, bright, star-gemmed canopy,
With silent tread, comes with the fading light.

And who can watch, unmoved, that tranquil ray,
Full of the late set sun's refulgent glow,
Still ling'ring on the sky so lovingly,
As loath to leave one heart uncheered below.

'Tis like the calm upon the tearless face,
When all earth's sorrows have been swept away,
That bright reflection of the inward peace
Stamped with love's signet on the lifeless clay.

And there are features in the day's last look,
Full of significance, if we would read
With minds attentive, in that wondrous book,
Whose lessons never fail to teach and plead.

Then are we standing, as it were between
Time and eternity, and with dread power,
The long, much thought of, unexplored unseen,
Bulks in the soul's eye, in that solemn hour.

. . . . . .

Still lies the night, o'er hamlet, hut, and town,
O'er fruitful valley, and unkindly steep,
Where awe is written on the rock's bold frown,
And weird, strong throbbings fill the moaning deep.

And what a change, a chaos most profound
Unchallenged reigns, where lately we beheld
Order and beauty shine on all around,
And with a soothing joy each bosom filled.

Nor skims the moon, like to a flattened ball,
At times half hidden by the flying cloud,
But sombre shadows hold the sway o'er all,
And gentle whispers now appear as loud.

And still the same sweet harmony pervades
The songless woodland and the cheerless plain,
'Tis but the evening's kindly cloak which shades
All nature, till the day returns again.

And now the sun-browned ploughman sinks to rest
On his straw mat—O kindly, honest clown,
Thence wilt thou rise at morn—full strong—refreshed
Much more than hapless prince from bed of down.

O happy peasant, with thy rugged mould!
And appetite regaled with good plain fare,
Thine is a heritage that lands or gold
Can never purchase, nor can titles heir.

. . . . . .

Fair Night! I love thee most when thou art full
Of the low melody of rustling leaves;
When western summer winds come soft and cool,
And smelling sweet of hayfield and of sheaves;

And when the tiny warbler of the grove
Cowers in the prickly branches of the fir,
Or soundly sleeps on swaying perch above,
Till morning light sets all the day astir.

Then many trifles which appeared to be
Too insignificant for time and thought,
Rise up around us, and, tho' silently,
Their claim on our attention is besought.

Thou hast a power pathetic, which the mind,
So full of busy day thoughts, cannot feel;
A majesty within thee lies enshrined,
Which thine own solemn hours alone reveal.

For thou art not a dead monotony,
A senseless, tuneless part of our brief time,
But earnest pleading voices speak in thee,
With rich variety in every chime.

And gentle is thy bearing—lo! thy touch
Is kindly as a mother's touch of love,
Thy soothing ministry beside the couch,
Like dews distilled from fragrant flowers above.

For thou dost bring unto the weary brain,
With thy deep, penetrating, powerful calm,
A flood of sweet new thoughts, to ease the strain,
For change of theme is oft a healing balm.

Imprudent thinker! if too wise thou art
To fly the malady, then know that bane,
Which like a constant sorrow eats the heart,
Will sap thy being till thou lov'st thy pain.

Then, vainly writhing in the serpent's fold,
Closer the deadly coils will twine around
Thy prostrate powers, and thy sad knell be tolled,
When timely leisure would have healed the wound.

. . . . . .

I love to watch the nodding of the trees
Betwixt me and the midnight rifts above,
And note the tuneful changes of the breeze
Vibrating unrestrained throughout the grove.

They whisper to me as alone I lie,
Amid the gloom, in sleepless reverie,
And as in measured beats they float me by,
Sweet is their God-like touch of sympathy.

They bring me in the night's long solitude
Back joys my warm heart never thought would cool,
When like the young roe thro' the dark fir wood
Full blithesomely I bounded home from school.

And many a sweet and ruddy boyish form
Long bronzed, and bending with the toils of earth,
Smiles kindly on me, with each grace and charm
Which bound me to them by the old school hearth.

And some long wept for in the silent gloom,
Flowers but in bud (ne'er suffered to expand
Where storms and mildew would corrode their bloom),
Were gathered early by the Gleaner's hand.

With gladsome voices, if perchance, from out
The time-dulled mem'ry, there can wake the chime,
Of long hushed music—Oh ! I hear them shout
In all the glee and glow of summer's prime.

I know them well, the grave has lost its power,
With gates unbarred it renders back its spoil;
Unspoiled they look, as summer's new blown flower,
For they have been but resting all this while.

Lo ! what a contrast ! I their compeer hoar,
Shrivelled and stooping, by a staff upheld,
Weak as a suckling, hobbling by the door,
Waiting in night, till morning be unveiled.

Oh ! vanished playmates ! shall I yet in truth
Behold you, when this bent and sickly frame
Glows with the flush of an exhaustless youth,
And find you all, tho' changed, the very same ?

As childhood, bounded by some towering wall,
Without the power or means to climb it o'er,
So is the hidden future to us all:
We know we are, and know but little more.

——o——

THE DYING POET.

"Literary employment, and literary rewards, are now to me matters of no importance."—So said Bethune, the dying Poet.

FAREWELL, ye pleasant dreamings of renown,
Too fondly have I cherished you; but now,
Expectant of a more enduring crown,
I leave the laurel to some other brow.

Of what avail is learning now to me?
O witching goddess, at thy sacred shrine,
Oft have I knelt a willing devotee;
Too much akin wert thou to the divine.

Once in the future I beheld, bestowed
By thy fair hand, on thy poor struggling son,
Fame's deathless laurel, while the muses bowed
Their high approval of the honour done.

Yes, O Minerva, thy enchaining spell
Concentered all my powers on one grand theme:
I loved to sing, and laboured to excel,
Perhaps too ardently, for man's esteem.

But if I sought the passing praise of men,
No double path my humble muse pursued;
Ne'er meanly stooped I to defile my pen
With thoughts unfitted to promote their good.

And fame and glory, these are words which thrill
The bard and hero to the spirit's core;
But truth is nobler, and more kindly still,
In royal dwelling and by cottage door.

Truth have I honoured, and I make no claim
To earth's distinction, but I frankly leave
The pleasing struggle, yea, my life's sole aim,
For wise and better singers to achieve.

And listen to me, all who'd try that race:
Think not to snatch the laurel, for it may,
As ye advance, still distant take its place,
And many fail, and drop off by the way.

Ah! few continue as they make the start;
Bright hopes are blighted, and their ardour dies,
Dull cares and sorrows press around the heart,
And their sweet singing dwindles into sighs.

Still unachieved, and on the far-off height
The coveted and tempting garland waves,
While all the vale beneath (some scarce in sight)
Is full of knolls, and these are poets' graves.

And if my vision now deceives me not,
As o'er a tombstone here and there I bend,
I learn that he who claims this fameless spot
Gave every promise of a brilliant end.

A singer born, the gift a potent power,
And with the highest mental culture joined,
But ah! truth's purest sweets began to sour,
And joys unreal suited best his mind.

And piety grew old, and dull her course,
Renouncing virtue and his early faith;
Downward he went, and on from bad to worse,
Unfit to live, and unprepared for death.

And there is, half-way up the giddy steep,
One lonely grave with wildflowers all around,
Whose honoured inmate, in unconscious sleep,
Sunk down exhausted ere the prize was found.

Sore, sore he toiled, and sweet the minstrel sang,
But life was ebbing—ebbing fast away;
And as his last note on the breeze was flung,
A worn and stringless harp the singer lay.

——o——

LINES WRITTEN UNDER MENTAL SUFFERING.

Oh! I have watched with sadness
The daylight pass away,
While others hailed with gladness
The closing of the day.

In silent, secret sorrow,
I've pressed my couch at night,
And wearied for the morrow,
And longed for its sweet light.

But daylight gently stealing,
Though it awhile might fill
My soul with lighter feeling,
Could not remove the ill.

Still day by day I wander,
That aching void within,
And sadly, vainly ponder
O'er bright days that have been.

And long and sore I've striven
To live the evil down,
But with the shades of even
The gloom returns anon.

But there's a bright day coming,
Behind which, nevermore,
Shall follow one sad gloaming
On heaven's eternal shore.

For hope's long cherished dreaming
Shall surely find above,
Immortal pleasures streaming
From undecaying love.

——o——

A MORNING STROLL AMONG THE WOODS ABOVE CARBERRY TOWER.

(A FRAGMENT.)

OH ! how regaling is the morning breeze,
When fragrant with the breath of flowers !
How sweet the song-birds' carol 'mong the trees,
When vieing with their vocal powers,
Each other in their native bowers,
The wood is full of soothing harmonies.

Yea, harmonies indeed, without a flaw,
Untrammelled by the rules of art ;
In faithful unison with nature's law,
They come, these sylvan songs to start,
Which wing their message to the heart,
And fill the soul with gladness touched with awe.

For what poor spirit would not feel the power,
Nor drink enjoyment from the sight ?
The cheerful aspect of this early hour,
The rural peace, and pleasing light,
Hill, vale, and woodland all look bright,
For summer lends to earth her queenly dower.

And labour looks half lightened of his load,
For with a more elastic pace
Steps he along life's care-entangled road,
And on his calm, less shaded face,
For us 'tis pleasant work to trace
More love to man, and deeper trust in God.

As we in crops matured will always find
The nature of the parent soil,
So the reflection of the happy mind,
In word frank spoken or bright smile,
Shines out; then welcome homely toil,
Which works the bitter into sweet to souls resigned.

Yea, welcome, homely toil, great boon thou'st been,
Not only for our daily food,
But wholesome outlet to the force within,
Which life of luxury ne'er could
Curb or subdue. Oh! if we would
Be well, we must be busy, chaste, and clean.

And here much good and pleasure might be found,
Not rubies, nor yet stores of gold,
In the old tale of this once famous mound
Made new, and most adroitly told,
How she of faultless earthly mould,
Proud "Queen of Scots," stood here all but uncrowned.

Unawed the peerless stood—stern men around,
A cold, a hard, and heartless band.
And 'mong the few who still allegiance owned,
No brawny arm with conq'ring brand
Outstretched to her a saving hand;
And this is Mary's stone, and classic ground.

Alas! that she, the fair, high, honoured one,
Born but to rule, should have been led
From happy rectitude, and left undone,
The weighty crown torn from her head,
And at the block lie ghastly dead!
And find no heart of ruth to pity—none.

And our self-crusted hearts would be as stone,
Did we repress the deep regret,
For bitterly indeed did she atone
For her grave faults; but it was hate
Above all else which sealed her fate,
And she was woman, human, and alone.

. . . . . .

And gazing from this proud historic height,
Where no rude sound can hurt the ear,
I hear th' endearing language of delight
Float thro' the balmy atmosphere,
From little timid warblers near,
Or high-toned chorister far out of sight.

For, higher than the highest note is heard,
The lark's far-sounding song of love,
With matchless power and seraph-being stirred,
Tied not by luxury of grove
To sing on earth, but drawn above,
Sings he, proud, poet-famed, celestial bird.

And to a higher point he still would go,
As if no tender fetter bound
His song-impassioned heart to hearts below,
And all his longing lay beyond
Those towering clouds, sublimely crowned
With glowing brightness white as alpine snow.

——o——

VERSES WRITTEN AT HUNTINGTOWER.

Oh! give me back, though rough they be,
The highland heights I trod before!
Tenfold the charms they have for me,
Compared with this tame scenery,
With no wild grandeur studded o'er.

What care I for these furrowed lands,
These stretching lawns and stately trees,
These views carved out by tiny hands,
Where many a lordly dwelling stands!
My soul is three times sick of these.

Oh! how my spirit sighs to hear
The murmur of the mountain stream,
And see its waters, silvery clear,
Leap onward in their wild career,
And sparkle in the sunny beams.

I long to hear the ousel's song,
Remote in lonely mountain glen,
To mark the brown stag, stately strong,
With agile footstep bound along,
Far from the haunts of toiling men.

Free from restraint I wandered there,
Unseen, unheeded, and alone,
And save my flock, I had no care;
But now, around me everywhere,
By prying eyes I'm gazed upon.

When I would sing some fav'rite strain,
I feel weighed down by strange control,
My muse is curbed; oh! I would fain
Be in some wildered dell again,
To shake these fetters from my soul.

A ceaseless yearning works within,
A longing for the quiet hill,
And oh! it grows intensely keen,
When thinking of some far-off scene,
The purple heath and singing rill.

There, in its own loved solitude,
My hermit spirit revels yet;
For fertile plain, and sheltering wood,
But pain and mock my pensive mood,
And fill me with a vain regret.

And oft in visions do I roam,
Where stands the time-sunk, honoured cairn,
Where wildflowers shed their wild perfume,
Around the sainted martyr's tomb,
Hid by the foxglove and the fern.

Then, give me, Fate ! I thee implore,
Some healthy, hermit-like abode,
Where strife and turmoil will be o'er,
And all shall lead my mind to soar
"Through nature up to nature's God."

—o—

'TIS PAST.

'Tis past ! and had I loved her less,
My fiery spirit would have borne,
Unmurmuring, its own bitterness,
Returning her cold look with scorn.

'Tis past ! and yet in that brief space,
I bore what I would not again,
What many years will not efface
Of foul, unmerited disdain.

'Tis past ! all I have cared to know,
All that my yearning soul could prize,
Sincere affection's hallowed glow,
All I have longed to realise.

'Tis past ! and yet, oh ! yet I feel
But one engrossing, powerful thought ;
One strong impulsive wish, to kneel
Where oft my spirit rapture caught.

'Tis past ! I sadly feel the pain,
The rapture and the bliss are o'er ;
So, too, the scorn, the high disdain,
Let them be past for evermore.

[The above was a fragment ; the last five lines added by Ed.]

THY SMILE.

Tho' rarest gems from ocean's caves
Were mine, and riches great in store,
And all the power ambition craves,
Without thy smile I'd still be poor.

Tho' fav'rite of some blushing fair,
Before whom many vainly knelt,
I would be wretched even there,
Where thy dear presence was not felt.

And tho' my brow, with laurels clad,
Told I had trod the path of fame;
This heart would still feel lone and sad,
Did I not merit thy acclaim.

But gems and laurels I have none,
Gold, power, and favour are not mine,
My wealth and happiness alone
Are centred in that smile of thine.

——o——

INHUMANITY.

Oh! this weary, weary bustle,
Oh! those hearts devoid of feeling,
Deaf to pity's mild appealing;
They make life a constant wrestle,
Souring every earthly pleasure;
With their fiendish, fell abusing,
Marring times of quiet musing,
Aye, and hours of pious leisure.

Think you, would you like to bear it?
Think you of the hot words burning,

Of the strife and bitter spurning
You have caused in many a spirit ;
Surely it is somewhere written,
Read it and forget it never,
Mercy will repay the giver ;
But the heart rebels when smitten.

—o—

JESSIE O' THE MILL.

Oh ! why did fate my wand'rings guide
'Mong southern mountains far away,
And lead me not to Keltie's side,
To spend the morn of love's sweet day.

But, Jessie ! since it is my lot
To meet thee on this happy eve,
About to leave thy natal spot,
My prayer for thy weal receive.

May that great Cause, who did ordain
That love should bind what none may part,
Uniting with its golden chain
Soul unto soul and heart to heart ;

Oh ! may that Power, thro' all thy ways,
Shower choicest blessings on thy head,
And lead thee safe thro' every maze,
In virtue's pleasant paths to tread.

Bright be the gloaming of thy life,
Protected by that Guardian still ;
Then, whether maid or wedded wife,
Bless'd will be Jessie o' the Mill.

TO MISS A— C—

(AUCHLICHIE MILL, CALLANDER),
On the receipt of her *C. D. V.*

AH! who can tell, my little maid,
When many years have flown,
If scenes so fair as here portrayed
Be still around thee thrown.
Who would not wish that even then
Thy heart would still be free
From anxious care, and light as when
Mine eyes first looked on thee?

Those spreading trees, that hallowed dome,*
Which rise on either hand,
Seem lovely as a fairy's home
In some enchanted land.
As some sweet nymph from sylvan shade
Comes forth to hail the breeze,
So lightly comest thou, arrayed
In all the charms which please.

How mild, how affable thou art,
Unconscious of the pain
These piercing eyes may one day dart
On some poor troubled swain.
Youth's happy light adorns thy brow,
Its lustre fills thine eye,
And I would guess that even now
Thy future hopes are high.

Far in the future, dost thou see
A life of taintless bliss?
Tho' fair, yet false the reverie,—
A changeful world is this.
I dare not tell thee that the sky
Will never wear a frown;
The sweetest flowers soon blighted lie,
The brightest sun goes down.

* Scenery on the *carte*.

For see yon boat upon yon lake,
No tempests round it blow;
And yet how soon the storm may wake,
No mortal man can know.
Ere long, perchance, by angry blast
Its frail form may be toss'd,
Till by the lashing surge at last
'Tis stranded on the coast.

I trust, however, in thy life,
The good shall far outweigh
The ills which, on this field of strife,
All meet within the fray.
Then with thy pilgrimage complete,
Across the "silent sea,"
By faith and hope, twin pilots meet,
Safe ferried may'st thou be.

[The last twelve lines added by G. M.]

——o——

OUR CHANGEFUL LIFE.

Times of slighting and of pleading,
Times of leisure and of care,
Times of failing and succeeding,
Times of hoping and despair,
Times of censure and of praising,
Times of peace and keen debate,
Times of building and of razing,
Times of love and bitter hate;

Times of smiling and of weeping,
Times of pleasure and of pain,
Times of sowing and of reaping,
Times of loosing and of gain,
Times of calm and wildest tossing,
Times of harmony and strife,
Times of yielding and opposing,—
All make up this changeful life.

YOUNG JANE OF SPITTALTON.

O'ER lovely hills, by rivers fair,
And through the city's crowded street,
Whole days of toil and anxious care,
Onward I've plied my weary feet;
And many smiling maids I've met,
Unequalled then appeared each one,
But I have seen no beauty yet
To match Young Jane of Spittalton.

You've seen the rose at early day,
Just as the sun was peeping through,
How beautiful each leaflet lay
All drenched in morning's pearly dew;
Fair are the pencillings of the rose,
And fair the heath-flower newly blown,
But dim the sweetest charms of those
Beside Young Jane of Spittalton.

And brightly beams her dark grey eye,
Expressive of a happy mind,
How soft and loving is her sigh,
Retiring, affable, and kind.
Let other maidens boast of birth,
And how their rich forebears have shone,
More wealth is in the modest worth
Of sweet Young Jane of Spittalton.

—o—

TO AN INFANT BROTHER.

THO' kindly was our greeting,
'Mid many a hope and fear,
Thy visit, ah! how fleeting,
Three days thou tarried'st here;

As flowerets of the mountain
'Neath morning's dewy smile,
Or waters from the fountain,
Thy spirit knew no guile.

Thou had'st no night of sorrow,
No day of wasting toil,
No shrinking from the morrow
Which oft, alas ! we feel ;
But if rewards are given
For hours we toil and pine,
Ah ! then our crowns in heaven
Will far outrival thine.

—o—

TASTES DIFFER.

WHAT unto me is wealth and happiness,
May to my neighbour be but little bliss ;
For, lo ! my aspirations may not rise,
Like his, above this earthly paradise.
More of the grovelling, and less sublime ;
Less of the heavenly, and more of time.
His is the costly gem, and nothing less ;
Mine but the tinsel or the outside dress.
So he would think, but here the diff'rence lies,
My *hobby* happens not to be his choice.

—o—

IMITATION.

Imitation of "O gin my love were yon red rose," C. S. S. ;
or, "O were my love yon lilac fair," R. BURNS.

OH ! if my love was a lily white
Within some sweet sequestered vale,

And I a ray of heavenly light
Which warms the summer's balmy gale,
Then would I shine on her stainless breast,
And feast on love's immortal flame,
Or waft her safe to some bower of rest,
Ere desolating winter came.

——o——

TO ALICE.

O YE muses, come and aid me, touch my pencil with your glow,
With your mantle overshade me, your bright halo round me throw;
Send me pathos, give me lightness, happy style and native brightness,
That my love my plaints may know.

Dearest Alice! do not scorn me, scorn would ill befit thy face;
Many graces now adorn thee, more than poet's pen can trace;
Vieing with the golden morning, winning love, and love returning,
Is by far the sweetest grace.

Unsuspecting, unbeguiling, breathing music in thy voice,
Never gloomy, ever smiling, making all around rejoice;
To approach thee, greatly fear I, thou art fair as eastern peri,
Who might be a prince's choice.

Yet my hopes are stayed upon thee, life without thee
is but death;
What tho' all my friends disown me! thou'rt my life,
my all beneath;
O fair Alice, I implore thee, since I live but to
adore thee,
Thy young heart to me bequeath.

——o——

WRITTEN IN THE EXPECTATION OF LEAVING FOR A FOREIGN LAND.

Oh! I have loved my native hills
With deep devotion, and I yet
Must leave them and their knolls and rills,
And face, perchance, uncounted ills,
But them I never shall forget.

Oh no! 'tis sacrilege to think
They from my mem'ry shall wane,
And tho' in feebleness I shrink
From separation, not one link
Shall e'er be broken of that chain.

Thro' all my years of pilgrimage,
Whither my wandering steps may tend,
Whate'er my after-life engage
From manhood's prime to hoary age,
Unchanged I'll live on to the end.

And when my sky is overcast,
If I but dared one boon to crave,
'Twould be, when good and ill are past,
And I have reached the goal at last,
Among those hills to find a grave.

ON VIEWING THE IMPRESSION OF A ROSE LEAF ON THE PAGE OF A YOUNG LADY'S SCRAP BOOK.

If I were master of the happy power
(Or rather what prim science would call art),
To sketch a leaf, or paint a little flower,
I would not try to paint, but pierce a heart.
What heart? you ask me. Ah! I must not tell.
One, be you sure, that ne'er would faithless prove,
But ever with the purest passion swell,
A never ceasing but increasing love.
Thine is a happy task, O painter—yes,
With all thy skill the fair one's page to deck.
And yours, O poet, is the self-same bliss,
In fittest language love's sweet vows to speak.
Both of you kneel at great Apollo's shrine,
Both of you drink the same inspiring rill,
And both with kindred longings strive to shine,
With fame's true light, on fame's bright pinnacle;
But who the greater is, or who is least?
Both may do good—for such are both designed:
One for the eye prepares a dainty feast,
The other brings a banquet for the mind.

—o—

WOMAN.

Woman! when all the virtues that can grace
One of thy sex are written in thy face,
When all the graces which adorn thy sphere,
In every word and work of thine appear,
I ask not whether riches be thy lot,
Or if the inmate of the peasant's cot,
Born and brought up 'mong mountains bleak and wild,
Or 'mid great rank, dame fortune's favoured child,

Whether or not taught at some classic school,
If pure religion be thy life's great rule ;
With such a priceless treasure, blest is he
Who loves, and is again beloved by thee.
Through all the "tear and wear," and jarring strife,
Which cloud and vex the ocean of his life,
In wildest storms thy presence brings a calm,
Thy soothing words a never-failing balm.
'Tis then, and only then, that he can find
That help in thee which Heav'n at first designed.
Without thee, like a "world without a sun,"
Or stately ship with nought to move her on,
Or wandering child with neither home nor friend,
An aimless, fameless, heartless life he'd spend.

Happy the child, tho' riches be not there,
Whose early days are spent beneath thy care.
Nightly for him the downy couch is spread,
But ere he stretch himself upon his bed,
Kneels down, taught by example more than word,
And prays the lovely prayer of our Lord ;
And who would not to thee devotion pay,
Who strewst with fairest flowers life's thorny way,
Smooths down the many fears which fill the breast,
And lulls the sickly child to balmy rest,
Then by its pillow watches while it sleeps,
Yea, for its welfare struggles, prays, and weeps.

·——o——·

TRUE HAPPINESS.

Poor man! to boundless wealth and titles born,
And doomed to sickening rounds of luxury,
I pity thee, tho' thou perchance would'st scorn
The mud-walled hovel and its rude roof-tree.
There grows the sterling bond of sympathy,
Love there *is* love, no mean, affected thing ;
Love nurtured there, 'mid toil and poverty,
Has in its tone Love's own unchallenged ring.

Capricious fashion, with all powerful law,
The bane of comfort and the household pest,
Finds in the clay hut, with its roof of straw,
But small inducement for so grand a guest.
Yet independence, with his head erect,
And mild endurance, with his winning grace,
Commanding from each grade a marked respect,
Oft in the poorest cottage finds a place.

——o——

TRIBUTE TO THE WORTH AND GENIUS OF JANET HAMILTON.

(A Fragment.)

Fair Spirit! Minstrel, or whatever name
Is most appropriate and dear to thee!
One all untutored and unknown to fame,
Uncouth and plodding as a clown can be,

Unskilled in verse, inelegant in style,
By birth no critic, and ne'er taught to view
Aught in that light, yet loving all the while
The beautiful, the passionate, and true;

Responsive ever to the mild appeal
Of look imploring, or of gentle word,
Tho' helpless often to do more than feel,
Yet sympathy will oft relief afford.

And in the pipings of the Ettrick Swain,
Or fine drawn pictures of our Ploughman Bard,
Those sentiments, of all, most entertain,
Which vibrate on the heart's most tender cord.

Oh! give me tenderness, altho' no part
Of pathos with this lay be intertwined;
To store the head may be a noble art,
But God-like is the power which soothes the mind.

And tho' unqualified, I'd now essay
(Hopeful of pardon for my lack of fire),
To strike in my own blunt, unmeasured way
Pan's past'ral reed or great Apollo's lyre.

Come, aid me then, O ye indulgent Nine,
Come, guardian Pan, inspire my tuneless lay
With noble thoughts, while at the sacred shrine
Of worth and genius, I this tribute pay.

. . . . . .

And lo! this is October, pale and sere,
Month unto thee the best of all the year.
Though in her reign the floral beauty's gone,
And winds are teeming with a dirge-like moan;
Fields gathered in, and ripe fruit "patt'ring down;"
With woods less vocal and now tinted brown,
With little Robin chirping by the eaves,
With crisp hoar morning and with falling leaves,
With low'ring sky and red sun dipping low,
And countless signs prophetic of the snow,
She, more than bursting glories of the spring,
Awoke thy staid but hopeful muse to sing.

And thou hast decked her sober, failing form,
Full matron-like, with age's sweetest charm,
Calm dignity, disturbed not by the storm
Of wasting winter coming on apace,
Wrath in his breast and fury in his face,
But full of that serenity which springs
From looking on the fairer side of things,
That lowly, true content, which ever brings
A free, full shower of blessing on its wings.

To thee all nature smiled with loveliness,
And at thy bidding donned her fairest dress.
Beneath the magic of thy wondrous pen
Brighter became the glow on hill and glen;

Deeper those gorgeous tints of burnished gold,
Like blossoms dropt from flowers of heav'nly mould,
Flung by the autumn sun o'er wood and wold,
O'er hoary battle tower and glassy lake,
O'er smiling, fruitful plain, and tangled brake;
Sweeter the music of the summer wood;
And from the peaceful flowery solitude,
As if angelic beings hovered there,
A purer incense filled the hallowed air

And plentiful as dewdrops of the morn,
Thy thoughts and striking images are born,
When thou art singing in life's busy mart
Those homely lays which speak to every heart,
And working nobly with a right good will
To stem the swelling tide of social ill;
Raising aloft thy voice above the din
Of crowded thoroughfare, and painting sin
In its true light, deterred not by the fear
Of wounding pride, but fully bent to tear
In shreds from off the foulsome leprosy
The flaunting robe of cursed hypocrisy.

——o——

SPARE YET ONE THOUGHT FOR ME.

When others sue thee for thy love,
And tell with flattering tongue
That thou'rt possessed of all which move
And captivate the young,—
Charms which will bind the sighing youth,
And make him kneel to thee,—
O Morna, tho' they tell the truth,
Spare yet one thought for me.

When friends are smiling on each side,
And bright hopes gild thy way,
And life flows on with even tide,
And seems one summer day,

And fate has destined me to bear
A harder lot than thee,
Then, gentle Morna! oh, then spare
One kindly thought for me.

——o——

SATIRICAL VERSES ADDRESSED TO A CRUEL AND TYRANNICAL OVERSEER.

O VILE mortal, what in nature
Can be half so base as thee!
Trampling on thy fellow-creature,
Crushing poor humanity.

Know the power thou art abusing
Is not thine, but only lent;
'Twas not given for accusing
Toiling men with wrong intent.

Thinkest thou to bind thy brother,
Soul and body? thou wilt not;
Tyrant! Despot! what another
Agent has the Devil got.

God forbid that thou should'st ever
Have the slave-whip in thy hand;
Thou hast will, but thou shalt never
Have the power in this free land.

Thou dost glory in oppressing
Honest-hearted, peaceful men,
But a day of wrong redressing
Will arrive yet, and what then?

Then the needless pain and trouble
Thou did'st make the poor to bear,
Will return upon thee double;
Doubled twice will be thy share.

All thy lying words and curses
Back upon thee will be flung,
And thy spirit by remorse's
Horrid torments will be stung.

Will thy threats of torture save thee?
Bragging coward! vengeful man!
God will take the power he gave thee,
Yea, and thwart thy choicest plan.

——o——

"*THOU ART THE MAN.*"

To Israel's highly favoured shepherd king,
When sent to show him his atrocious guilt,
And as he strove conviction home to bring,
And make its arrows still be deeper felt,
Unlooked for as the lightning's sudden stroke,
These heaven commissioned words the prophet spoke.

And we, if we are only half sincere,
And will but half our words and actions scan,
As plainly as from prophet lips will hear
These stern accusing words, "Thou art the man."
Think not they are for erring kings alone:
They are a sermon preached to every one.

Too oft, like David, we'd have cause for shame,
Were we by some unerring standard tried,
And that for which we would our neighbours blame,
Would shame ourselves were the same tests applied.
Oh why each little slip against them bring?
We'd rather play the prophet than the king.

ON READING DEAN RAMSAY'S STORIES OF SCOTTISH CHARACTER.

You who possess the Scottish soul,
Who with delight have noted
The clever cuts and sayings droll,
By Scottish authors quoted;

Let not a word a Scotchman says
(If it be worth your noting)
Escape your mind, in coming days
Perhaps 'twill serve for quoting.

——o——

THINK OF ME.

Oh! think of me when the twilight hour
Hath cradled all in a holy calm;
When the pearly drops enrich the flower,
Which scents the air with its healing balm;
When the silvery moonbeams brightly shine
With a sweetness only dimmed by thine.

And think of me with a deeper thought,
And on thy soul let my image dwell,
When another comes, a captive caught,
The plaints of his love-sick heart to tell;
Oh then, like the woodbine round the tree,
Cling to my memory, think of me.

——o——

HOME.

When thinking of his home, say who has not
Felt sacred rapture beating in each thought!
Away from it, tho' 'mid the pomp and glare
Of court and palaces so seeming fair,
When spoken is that almost holy word,
A painful gladness thrills some secret chord;
Yea, from amid applauding crowds will glide
The silent thought to some fair river side,
Of youth's sweet cup take there another drain,
And revel 'mid its fairy joys again;
Nor darkest poverty, nor brightest fame,
From mem'ry can efface that cherished name.

Our native land—these words are briefly said,
And spoken oft with little interest paid;
But when we come to stand upon the shore,
And a few anxious friends around us press,
Long cherished ones we may behold no more,
And every pulse-beat is a heart-throb less
We have to spend in our own land—Ah! then,
Methinks, before us there, in swift review,
Will pass the mountain side, the wood, the glen,
And far-off homestead, which our young life knew.

——o——

TO A DYING STARLING.

Poor bird! I mourn thy fate, but why need I
Be thus effeminate? 'tis weak to mourn;
Tho' tears may beautify fair woman's eye,
Man deems them worthy only of his scorn.

Still, tears are precious; noble men have wept,
Men who have dignified life's varied spheres,
Men who have planned and toiled while others slept;
And they were men no less, tho' men of tears.

No more for thee shall spring, with genial ray
Smile on the winter-wasted earth anew,
And trace her likeness fair on "bank and brae,
In bursting germ and flowers of endless hue.

No more to us, 'neath summer's cloudless sky,
Perched high upon the old time-shattered tree,
Wilt thou, with swelling throat and lustrous eye,
Pour forth thy wondrous, changing melody.

And thou wert happy in the dewy glade,
A ceaseless, tireless, go and come again,
And what a medley grand thy nestlings made,
Of scream and chatter in the hollow plane.

'Twas flowery summer then, no sullen mood
Unnerved thy wing, nor stayed thee in thy flight,
Unwearied with thy song, and search for food:
Love gave the one, and made the other light.

But now, how sad the change! 'mid winter gloom,
Thy heart's blood trickling on the frozen snow,
With shattered limb, and that once starry plume
Ruffled and soiled, and shorn of all its glow.

Gone are the flowers, those lovely things of earth,
From hedgerow, field, and every sunlit nook,
Gone with the zephyr's sigh and summer mirth,
With hum of bee and song of bird and brook.

And gone with these, thy life so bright and brief;
Poor, sinless thing, wilt thou exist no more?
Hast thou no hope, no fond, innate belief
In some pure state with endless life in store?

Breaks there upon thy vision not one ray
Of light to cheer thee in this hour of need?
Thou that could'st cheer the heart with thy sweet lay,
Must thou thus hopeless die, and helpless bleed?

And surely nature's work was worse than vain,
If for this painful end she brought thee forth,
Adorned thee with a robe without a stain,
As monarch ne'er could vie with all his worth,

Gave thee a song, and taught thee how to sing,
With love's true sympathy thrilled deep thy breast,
Gave thee an inborn power to know the spring,
And when, and where, and how to build thy nest.

A marvel unto man, lo! how expert,
No artisan with finely fashioned tool
Could match thee in thy work; perfect thou wert,
Without the aid of compass, square, or rule.

And if she left thee powerless to aspire
To aught beyond the boundary of the grove,
Thy being never beat with one desire,
Which kept not unison with her and love.

——o——

THE HEATHER BELL.

FAR in the wildered dell, and in the moorland wood,
Thou bloomest, sweet heather bell, the type of solitude.
Where on his dewy wing the skylark soars away
To heaven, loud carolling his morn and evening lay;
Around the mountain cairn, upon the martyr's grave,
Hid in the brake of fern, thy lovely red bells wave
Beside the shepherd's cot, where laughing streamlets sing
By many a lovely spot in their long journeying;
Where on the zephyr's breast, like to a fairy queen
In bridal garments dressed, the butterfly is seen;
Where many a melting note, sweet as the lover's tale,
On golden echoes floats adown the flowery vale:
These are thy homes, sweet flower, there is thy little bell,
Hung by that secret power, spirit of wood and dell.

THE CROOK BEFORE THE CROWN.

Oh, give me the mountain, tho' shaggy its breast,
The far-winding valley with wild wood all dressed,
The fierce dashing torrent, the grand towering rock,
My mother-spun mantle, my book and my flock.

Then not with the monarch, tho' dazzling his crown,
Would I exchange places, far better my own;
If glory is wanting, contentment is here,
A jewel found seldom in high kingly sphere.

——o——

DEATH.

O inexorable, all-conquering Death,
O leveller supreme, thou bringest all
Within thy pale; all men of every faith,
And class, and colour, answer to thy call.
Rank has no power, and power availeth not,
And honour, wealth, and learning, all are vain,
And even science has found no antidote
For thy disastrous, universal bane.

Sad is the havoc wrought by thy stern power;
That power invisible, which seals our fate,
Must leave its canker on the sweetest flower,
And most immutable of man's estate,
And squander all the wealth of love, and blight
The fairest promise young hope ever gave,
Strike rising genius from her envied height,
And lay ambition in a nameless grave.

And yet thou art a welcome, heav'n-sent guest
To sorrowing, outworn humanity;
Oh! turn we not from all the world's unrest
Unto the pure, deep quiet found in thee.

The ceaseless turmoil and the fretting care,
The weary struggle for the "daily bread,"
And all the miseries which we now bear,
Are felt not in the region of the dead.

——o——

CATHERINE NAIRN.

Sacred to the memory of Catherine Nairn, who died on the 4th July 1878.

"Heaven, who beholds our sadness,
Hath to the trusting heart assurance spoken
Of that blest land, where, free from care and pain,
Fond hearts unite again."

—STANLEY.

AND thou hast left us when the fullest bloom
Of summer clothes all nature, O our friend;
When all the wealth of song, and the perfume
Of all our fairest flowers so sweetly blend;
When all which beautifies the chequered scene
Of our existence is surpassing fair;
When summer gladness fills the heart within,
And its own beauty greets us everywhere;

And when the summer of thy transient life
Was brimful still of joyous melody;
When, far above the world's great sea of strife,
Hope's glorious sun shone brightly out to thee:
And if it vanished when the height of noon
Seemed all aglow with its celestial flame,
It perished not, but disappeared thus soon,
To wear in heaven its new and better name.

And do we sin to cherish those bright dreams,
Which only may be dreams and nothing more?
Sin to enjoy the pleasant light which seems
Nowhere so bright as when it shines before.

We may ; but spare, and do not take away,
If not God's greatest gift, a precious boon,
Leave Hope, till man shall find a better stay
To lean his over-burdened soul upon.

Long will we miss thee in our lowly way,
And feel the blank, but we can only feel,
For words are powerless, and no imagery
Can the sad yearning of the heart reveal.
Who may presume with aught like truthfulness
To picture the fond brooding of the soul ?
Or shadow forth that depth of loneliness
Which death brings evermore, o'ershading all.

And now, while standing in that awful shade
Flung o'er us by the sombre cloud of death,
Sad witnesses how brightest prospects fade,
And sweetest pleasures vanish in a breath,
How truly do we feel our portion here
Is but the promise of " good things to come ; "
The fruit is gathered in another sphere,
The full enjoyment lies beyond the tomb.

The cross must evermore precede the crown ;
But as the day, o'erfraught with toil and heat,
Makes the cool quiet which the night brings down
O'er all the world a thousand times more sweet,
So will that rest, that pure tranquility,
Of peace benign the blessèd atmosphere,
Be fully tenfold more enhanced when we
Have buffeted our last encounter here.

At morn, and noon, and at the evening meal,
Does fancy hear thy footsteps at the door ;
But ah ! thou comest not, and sad we feel,
For thou wilt cross our threshold never more.
We will, and yet we scarcely dare to grieve,
Our " loss thy gain," and we are surely chid
By the consoling thought, for we believe
That thou art safe with our immortal Head.

For ever safe, and oh! the blessedness,
The pure felicity, the joy divine!
No human heart can know, no tongue express
The fulness of the gift which now is thine.
All earth's untold possessions never gave
One joy like those unsullied joys above,
All which the ransomed soul can ever crave
Dwells in the world of Christ's amazing love.

A love unfathomed as the great deep sea,
Unmeasured as the boundless realm of thought,
Magnificent in pure sublimity,
And with the most transcendent treasures fraught.
Its deep intensity can never wane,
Wonder's great theme throughout eternity,
In the majestic glory of its reign,
Of mysteries profound the mystery.

And now, with all thy sorrows left behind,
The final act in life's great drama o'er,
With long lost sainted relatives rejoined,
And love's exhaustless ocean all before,
Wait thou for us, for that momentous time
Will shortly come, it may be very near;
Oh! we would join thee in that sinless clime,
When we have finished our short mission here.

——o——

IN MEMORIAM—MY BROTHER.

"Gentle Brother!
When my trembling soul shall rest
On the mystic, awful threshold
Of the mansions of the blest,
Will you meet me,
Early greet me,
Fold me to thy sinless breast?" ANON.

PLAYMATE of my life's bright morning,
Sharer of my hopes and fears!
Lo! again I see returning
Thro' the mist of toil and years,

Those our days of joyous childhood
In the distance long grown dim,
Spent beside the moorland wildwood,
And the quiet mossy stream.
And I hear the wild birds singing
On that moorland far away,
Watch again the grey clouds flinging
Their broad shadows o'er the brae ;
And the little bees are humming,
Hieing homeward with their store,
And a world of sweet flowers blooming
Round the old cot on the moor.
Oh ! the old cot standing yonder,
Slowly falling, stone by stone,
To my sad heart yet seems grander,
Dearer far than all I've known.
And the mingled plaintive bleating
Of the flocks around the fold,
Come up with the hearty greeting
Of the shearers, young and old.
Oh ! how swiftly disappearing
From the homesteads on the plain
Are those men of rustic rearing,
Cautious, candid, homely men.
True, they were of lowly station,
Far from grandeur and from fame,
In their simple avocation,
Little praise and little blame ;
Yet they were true men of merit
(Thought perchance by some uncouth),
Filled by one unswerving spirit,
Firm adherence to the truth.
Theirs was not a fitful turning
From this principle to that,
But a steady tranquil burning
Of a heartfelt truth throughout,
And the nearer to our duty,
And the more remote from strife,
Will appear in power and beauty
The example of their life.

. . . . .

. . . . .

How my heart still beats with ardour,
Lit by fancy's happy rays,
Clothing with unfading verdure
Those bright spots of our young days.
I, while memories thus restore me
Voices hushed in mute decay,
Dream not of the years pass'd o'er me,
Think not that my locks are grey.
But I fling from life its sadness,
Live but in the deep warm joys,
Hear nought but the ringing gladness
Which we felt when we were boys.
And thy voice, so uncomplaining,
Thrills me with its music still,
Oh! how sweet that there's a lining
To the cloud time cannot dull.
But, alas! the silent reaper
Lays thee, brother, with the dead,
And I stand beside thee, sleeper,
Feeling all life's sweetness fled.
Oh! how blank, how cheerless, only
Ye can tell that solitude,
Who ere this have, sad and lonely,
By the grave's side weeping stood.
All the hopes ye may have cherished,
All the joys ye may have known,
In such moments may have perished,
All by one sad stroke o'erthrown.
When the flowers are disappearing,
And the sere leaves falling down,
Long enduring and forbearing,
Gentle brother! thou art gone!
And thy uneventful story
Has an interest now for none;
Like full many gone before thee,
Missed not, for thou wert not known.

When I saw thee last, how lowly
And how lonely was thy lot,
And a tinge of melancholy
In thy every word was wrought.
And thy weary look is written
Deep upon my bleeding heart,
Oh! my brother! till I'm smitten
Low as thou, 'twill not depart.

. . . . .
. . . . .

Soon with trembling hands we'll lower thee
Down into the "dreamless bed,"
And the tears which we shed o'er thee
Will be tears sincerely shed.
In that "field of graves" uncounted
Thou wilt take thy last repose.
Costly stone, and richly mounted,
With its list of unfelt woes,
May not mark where thou art sleeping,
But, perhaps much better still,
There will be the willow weeping,
And the wild flowers from the hill.
These have all along been blended,
In their fragrance and their bloom,
With our lives, and when they're ended,
What more fitting for our tomb!
In their pure and placid sweetness
May we not an emblem see,
Fraught, methinks, with no unmeetness,
Of another life to be.
Is there nought for this sad yearning
Far down in the heart's recess,
In the stated, sure returning
Of their summer loveliness!
Is it not to us a token,
Sweet assurance to the soul,
That those tender ties now broken
Will hereafter be made whole!

That those forms to earth now given,
Forms, tho' mortal, still most dear,
Will yet in the light of heaven
Happy shining forms appear!
Reason fails, but revelation
With religion come to save,
Telling us the termination
Of our lives is not the grave.
Then, my brother, will we cherish
The sweet hope of meeting thee,
Where no ties of kindred perish,
Where no bleeding hearts will be,
Where the gloom of death will never
Cloud the brightness of that day,
Where the reign of life for ever
Holds a universal sway.

———o———

REV. JOHN WISE.

Tribute to the memory of the Rev. John Wise, who died on the 2nd October 1879.

"To one great aim his heart and hopes were given,
To serve his God, and gather souls to heaven."—PRINGLE.

AGAIN, grim monarch, with imperial sway,
Silent, yea, noiseless as the lightest breath,
Yet overwhelming in thy might, away
Thou bearest to thy dark domain, O Death!
The loved, the hoary, and the long revered,
The mild but faithful soldier of the cross,
Example of rare excellence, endeared
To countless hearts, who feel and mourn his loss.

Away from all thy work and trials here,
Thou servant of the Lord, gone to be blest;
Bless'd in a higher and more active sphere,
Where love's pure, holy services are rest.

And thou wert loath indeed to quit the field,
Thy heart was in thy Master's work; and now
The ever-widening realm of heaven shall yield
Abundant scope for labourers such as thou.

O anxious toiler in thy chosen sphere!
One of the noblest of the noble few,
Thine earnest pleadings never more we'll hear,
Thy friendly counsels nor thy warnings true;
With single heart and undivided aim,
With this alone, and always this in view,
To help the weak, the erring to reclaim,
And labour on while there was work to do.

Ah! well we know ours is no fancied loss:
Thy homely, unaffected earnestness,
Thy helping hand in bearing our life's cross,
Thy sympathy in seasons of distress;
Thy genial warmth, thy ever ready smile,
Thy life with patient self-denial fraught,
Enforcing in the sweetest, noblest style,
Those precious precepts which thy doctrines taught.

These may be trifles which the blinded sons
Of pleasure deem not worthy of a name,
Like the best actions of earth's noblest ones,
Least lauded by the brazen tongue of fame;
But they are blossoms which the Gleaner's hand
Hath gleaned, and garnered in that home above,
Where the rich vintage of that "better land"
Shall yield to thee its fruits of joy and love.

And while we journey still where thou hast trod,
May it be ours with grateful hearts to find,
Like fingerposts along our desert road,
Those "footprints in the sand" thou'st left behind.
For the example of a life well spent,
Spent in the God-appointed when and where,
With piety's own lovely spirit blent,
Is no mean heritage for us to heir.

Thine was the grandest aim on earth below,
And thine will be the highest joy above;
No greater bliss the human soul can know,
For both the labour and the prize is love.
Farewell! loved pastor, brother, guide, and friend!
A last and most affectionate adieu!
God grant us, when the shades of death descend,
As many loyal friends, and foes as few.

——o——

THE MARTYR.

Rest, Martyr, rest, the fight is o'er,
The Persecutor's rage is vain,
His demon deeds shall vex no more,
No more his malice give thee pain.

Men yet to come, who learn of thee,
Unfeignedly will bless thy God,
That thou hast to posterity
Such priceless legacies bestowed.

And when at evening, round the hearth,
Thy many sufferings are made clear,
Virtue will venerate thy worth,
And pity give thy wrongs her tear,

And justice raise his brawny arm
To fight as thou did'st for thy Lord,
Fearless of persecution's storm,
Assured of thine own bright reward.

——o——

COMPENSATION FOR EARTHLY SORROW.

O EARTH! how fleeting all thy prospects fair!
How fading all thy prized and choicest flowers!
Anon the bleeding heart and vacant chair,
The silent hearth and lonely home, are ours.
By those vain yearnings of the heart's deep core,
By that sore anguish of the widowed breast,
By grief's dark shadow daily looming o'er
Some life, we learn that this is not our rest.

Yet oft while we, with hearts surcharged with grief,
In mournful strains the fatal stroke deplore,
The star of hope shines out in "bold relief"
Upon the darkness of this death-doomed shore!
Then o'er the dreary gloom its welcome ray
Burns with a brightness erst we did not know,
And all the storm-clouds of the troubled day
Pass by, lit up by mercy's radiant bow.

And trustful patient spirits from amid
Their sufferings and their struggles here below,
With greater confidence lift up the head,
And see in the grand settings of the bow,
The signet stamp of an Almighty hand,
The pledge of the Great Promiser, whose love
And sympathetic faithfulness shall stand
Unchanged, when earth and earthly scenes remove.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE TOMB.

(LATER POEMS.)

1885-86.

THE WHINNY DELL.

DEARLY I love the whinny dell,
Aglow with all its golden bloom;
With music sweet as Sabbath bell,
The stream meanders thro' the broom,
And gracefully the larches swing
Their tasseled branches by its side,
And wood-doves mate, and linnets sing,
And primrose clusters fringe its tide.

It is a lovely vale indeed,
A paradise of rural peace;
And trespass law, and grasping greed,
Shrink to profane its sacredness.
O hallowed scenes, and sunny days,
My young life's love is with you still;
And though but feebly, I would raise
My humble muse thy fame to trill.

Unchanged by time and troubles sore,
Like woodbine twining round the tree,
That love but grows, and strengthens more,
Image, O whinny dell, of thee!
I love thee not for flowers and trees,
Nor yet thy soothing summer song,—
All these I prize, but not for these
I've loved thee thus sincere and long.

Nor for those joys I love thee so,
My ramblings there in schoolboy days,
Nor creeping bramble, nor for sloe
Trailed round thy scaurs in pathless maze.
Quick sped the joyous midday hour,
When scrambling through thy tangled copse,
For life had then no wintry shower,
And life was bright with summer hopes.

Upon those scenes old mem'ries dwell,
For still they look supremely fair,
And men with battle scars can tell
How they in boyhood gambolled there.
By hazel clump, and gnarled oak,
Those hoary vet'rans oft have strayed,
Long ere they heard the battle's shock,
Or turned aside the foeman's blade.

Low in thy bosom, by the church,
My playmates sleep now, not a few
Who sickened in life's morning march,
And died ere aught of care they knew.
And cherished friends, tho' none may tell,
And laud their worth in poets' rhyme,
As trees by lightning struck, they fell,
And left me in their buoyant prime.

They had not lived till brows of care
And bending forms told doubly plain
How they had borne their own full share
Of hardships in life's "long campaign."
How in the wasted battle front,
Exposed to charge of sword and shell,
They calmly stood amid the brunt,
Where fair young comrades round them fell.

And this lone heart is sad to think
Upon those graves so cold and still,
Long swathed in green upon thy brink,
Fair stream! by quiet Temple Mill.

It is for these that I have kept
Thy name so bright on mem'ry's scroll;
Yea, 'tis for these that I have wept
The tearless sorrow of the soul.

But why this sorrow and this gloom?
Within God's acre all are safe;
No robber's hand shall spoil the tomb,
No troubles in the graveyard chafe.
Oh! whinny dell, adieu! adieu!
I've sung to thee my last sad strain;
No more thy many charms I'll view,
Nor hear thy summer songs again.

NEWTON, MAY 1886.

M—— B——.

THRO' many a weary, trying year, poor Mary, thou hast passed!
But to the longest night on earth the morning comes at last.
But for the darkness of the cloud, and fury of the storm,
The pleasant light and soothing calm would have not half the charm.
Oh! surely to the soul set free, sweet, sweet must be the light,
And bright the glory of that day, where falls no cloud of night.
A happy change from claybuilt hut, and scenes of ceaseless care,
To home of joy without alloy, in realms divinely fair.
Unlike to earth's supremest bliss, these joys shall never bring
The painful thought, "at best estate" they are but vanishing.
How deep and pure those pleasures are, those streams which ever flow
From the great Fountain-head of bliss, on earth we cannot know.

IN MEMORIAM.

John Fernie. Aged 12 years and 10 months.

Fair Boy! I saw thee when the summer noon,
Like thy young life, was full of melody,
Nor thought I then the fatal stroke so soon,
From the grim spoiler's hand, should fall on thee.
Free as the stream which murmured by us then,
The music of thy heart was gushing forth;
Its rapture thrilled thro' every nerve and vein,
In unison with all things fair on earth.

Not blither was the skylark's morning song,
Nor lighter skipt the lambkin in its play,
Than 'mong thy schoolmates thou didst trip along,
Greeting with smiles each known face by the way;
But oft as I have seen the mountain top,
Burnished with gold, soon lost in clouds of gloom,
So has the pleasing summer-light of hope
Shone on the pathway to an early tomb.

For passing as the tide of that same stream,*
The story of thy sojourn here was told,
Oh! it was fleeting as the lightning's gleam,
Seen in the darkness on the distant wold.
And it is hard, our selfish hearts would sigh,
When youth's delicious cup is at the lip,
Like mercies spilt or broken bowl to lie,
Ere of the pleasing draught we take one sip.

But hear how sweet the poet sings, and true:†
The flowers among the ripe and bearded corn
Were by the Reaper's sickle gathered too,
And to the treasure-house in safety borne;
For by that reaper strong, "whose name is Death,"
A watchful loving form was seen to stand,
And as the Reaper cut the flowers beneath,
Gently they fell into the watcher's hand.

* The stream at Darnoe Bridge. † Longfellow.

So now, tho' by the hearth thy vacant place
  Reminds us daily of the heart's deep loss,
Casting a graver light upon the face,
  And whispering to the soul, "Take up thy cross,"
There is no waste, no random shaft can fall:
  Unerring Wisdom, in the courts above,
With faultless justice weighs the lot of all,
  Directed by unchanging, boundless love.

Yes, mourning ones, tho' oft our hearts now ache
  With secret pain, and here small comfort find,
Still hope you on, for soon the morn will break,
  And sorrow's night of gloom leave far behind.
Far down the course of all succeeding time,
  On angel wings of love shall ever flow,
To faith and patience sweet the words sublime,
  "What I do now ye shall hereafter know."

———o———

FORGET-ME-NOT.

THERE is a little flower of graceful hue.
  In quiet woodland dell, and summer grot,
A consecrated gem of azure blue,
  The drowning lover named Forget-me-not.
And ever since that flower of modest mien,
  In hidden sweetness bright on moor and plain,
The happy pledge of plighted troth has been,
  Symbolical of love's abiding reign.

For many a faithful swain, and maiden too,
  Have kept as love's memento that fair gem;
What tho' a myth, if they believed it true,
  'Twas still a sacred, precious boon to them:
And often has this charm-surrounded flower,
  With young affection's tend'rest language fraught,
Come to the sad one in her lonely bower,
  To drooping hope new life and promise brought.

Oft have I seen it by the old ash tree,
In all its storied beauty peeping forth,
As small and frail a thing as one could see,
And save its winning name as small in worth.
But when we think of all that name implies,
And all our wand'ring hearts may have forgot,
A deeper meaning in the symbol lies,
And we revere the flower Forget-me-not.

It may have met us in our changeful mood,
With thoughts of warning or with words of cheer,
Amid the mists of some dark solitude,
With fiends around us and no angels near;
Or drifting rockward on false pleasure's wave,
Perhaps it pointed to the old home cot,
And with significance sublimely grave,
Sighed by the altar there—Forget-me-not.

——o——

ADDRESS TO TOILERS.

Ye children of toil, who swelter and broil,
And bronze in the fire of the sun,
Or cut thro' the mine, where no sunbeams shine,
And no musical brooklets run;

And ye who must stand, with the horny hand,
And the sinewy arm and long,
Where the hammer swings, and the anvil rings
A chorus sublime to your song;

Ye pale ones who weave, with tramp, draw, and heave,
Your life like the woof on the loom,
Or sew, knit, or spin, without or within,
The dress for the bridal and tomb;

Ye ten thousands more, spread the wide world o'er,
Who labour at this or at that,
Oh! never be blunt, press on to the front,
For toil with true merit is fraught.

'Tis better to work, and sweat like a Turk,
If nothing more galling molest,
Than toss on your bed with an aching head,
And sigh for one moment of rest.

The heat and the thirst, the darkness and dust,
Are trying, no doubt, now to bear;
But sigh not nor frown, you're kings with a crown,
If the blessing of health be there.

There's a darker night, and a sterner fight,
And a heavier work to do;
Then fling not away the cross of to-day,
Lest a worse be chosen by you.

Our labour is light when we know the night
Will bring with Elysian sleep,
Sweet dreams for the brain, new strength for the strain,
And a solace for those who weep.

Then work, every man, as well as ye can,
Well timing your strength and your speed,
For soon we must shift our place in the drift,
And younger men come to the lead.

—o—

TO A BLACKBIRD.

The only songster I had the pleasure of hearing in 1885.

SWEET bird, that hail'st the golden dawn,
With mellow note in thicket low,
Or warblest forth upon the lawn
Thy vespers from the flowering sloe,

Well thou dost know the spring's return,
For God hath taught thee thus to know,
And sing aloud, nor downcast mourn,
Tho' flowers be few and chill winds blow.

Hast thou forsook the woodlands fair,
And come to sing beside us now,
To cheer us in our moods of care,
And chase the shadows from our brow?
If thou canst sing on cypress bough,
Or on the lowly bay bush top,
Why should we fretting cares allow
To mar our joy and dim our hope?

Thou dost not soar like yon proud bird,
Whose fame no poet fails to sing,
Whose glorious matin notes I've heard
Thro' all the moorland stillness ring;
And sweet they rose, and sweet they fell
O'er tinkling brook and bubbling spring,
Till hillside green and hazel dell
Teemed with the rich, deep echoing.

But tho' thou hast no buoyant wing,
And dost not rise with graceful flight,
At morn's celestial gate to sing,
And hail with joy the new-born light;
Still, with thy woodland echoings,
The heart is soothed when beating wild,
As if a harp with trembling strings
Were touched by fingers undefiled.

But thou dost sing in lowly bush,
So unobtrusive is thy mien,
Sweet in the evening's tranquil hush,
And bright in summer's morning sheen.
Though like the lark I fain would soar
In love, and praise, and gratitude,
Yet when my woes I would outpour,
I'd seek, like thee, the solemn wood.

SOMEWHAT AKIN.

As hapless songster, which the fowler's net
  Has doomed to prison life for evermore,
In its captivity may ne'er forget
  The happy songs it warbled forth before,

But sings as if it felt the summer's breeze,
  Or saw the blooming flowers beneath its feet,
Or heard its old dear songmates 'mong the trees,—
  Lost joys its sad heart never more can greet.

What though it sings that soothing summer lay,
  'Tis living only in the sky above,
Or in the rich green woodlands far away,
  Its young life's paradise, and own lost love.

So I, now banished from the stretching moor,
  And all the glory of the rugged glen,
The nameless grandeur of the mountain hoar,
  And from the homes and beaten paths of men;

And seeing only while I'm waiting here,
  From morn to night, and solemn night to morn,
In mournful retrospective light appear,
  The flock-clad hillside, and the lonely tarn,—

Feel in our sympathies a kindred lot;
  And while, dear linnet! in thy little cage
Thou carolest to me thy sweetest note,
  I'll sing to thee from old poetic page.

And cheerfully, as on the mountain top,
  Would I still sing to gladden our lone hours,
For by this wondrous mystery of hope
  My life still blooms with amaranthine flowers.

NEWTON, 13th May 1886.

THE LAND WHERE THE EAGLE SOARS.

And this is the land where the eagle soars,
O'er his rock-built home by the northern sea,
Where the fisher's song, as he plies his oar,
Chimes in with the wave right joyously.

Bold bird of the rock! when the billows sweep
Round thy watchtower base, in their wrathful might,
Unawed thou canst gaze on the seething deep,
And peacefully brood on the giddy height.

The land of the heath and the moorland mist,
Where the flocks roam far o'er the furzy fell,
And the stag bounds light, with his dappled breast,
Through the rugged pass of his native dell;

Where the grey curlew on the upland screams,
And the moorhen wades thro' the reedy fen;
Oh! these are the scenes of the muse's dreams,
And the touching themes of the poet's pen.

For this is the land of immortal song,
Where the bard has touched, with a power sublime,
The hidden springs of the young and strong,
And solaced the old with his tenderest rhyme;

And wept o'er the wrongs of the lonesome glen,
By the ruined hall and the roofless cot,
Where the loyal clans of unflinching men
Came true to a man at the pibroch's note.

For the rust is red on the broad claymore,
And the song wakes not in the festive hall,
Where the banner droops on the cold dank floor,
From its fameless place in the mouldering wall.

And the turf is green on the manly breast,
And the hearth he loved by the heath o'ergrown;
While his offspring, far in the fertile west,
Is claimed by that land as her stalwart own.

Then know, as ye gaze on this land of ours,
By the craggy steep or the rolling flood,
That those desert haunts, and those sweet wild flowers,
Are immortalized by the martyrs' blood.

For the bracken bush, and the rock's cold ledge,
And the streams o'ergrown by the mossy sod,
Have a hiding been from the trooper's rage,
When athirst for blood the demon rode

For the hoary cliff, and the fertile strath,
And the solemn glen, and the cavern deep,
Have blushed to behold his murderous wrath,
Like a fiend that could neither rest nor sleep.

But the scene is changed ! for the martyrs' dust,
'Neath the mouldering cairn and the grassy sward,
Like a relic of love, a sacred trust,
Is left with the angels of God as guard.

Though his grave is hid in those wilds untrod,
And his life unwrit in his country's lore,
His name is enshrined in the heart of God,
Where he lives in his love for evermore.

NEWTON, March 1886.

——o——

TO MARY

OF CALZIEBOHALZIE.

I LIVED for thee—delusive dream !
Like summer's fairest beauty fled,
Or like the hill flower-margined stream,
With lovely airbells thickly spread.
For thou wert dead ; the great unknown
Had kindly, o'er thy chequered youth,
Its friendly cloak of darkness thrown,
Long ere I knew the painful truth ;

And angel-tended flowers had grown,
  And died, above the long-loved dead,
And autumn's mournful breezes strown
  With withered leaves their lowly bed.

Oh! were the cold hard-hearted near,
  When thou didst die? and only those
Who feigned to grieve, but had no tear
  To spare thee at thy sad life's close?
Life was a failure, thou didst err,
  Yet never could thy love grow cold.
Thy heart was mine, thy hand elsewhere;
  Thyself a chattel, bought and sold!
There came a sadness, stern and deep,
  A surging of the passions strong,
A grief which knew not how to weep,
  When first I learned the cruel wrong.

Say! didst thou think, in thy last hour
  Of consciousness, of broken faith,
And that lone stream upon the moor,
  Where we had vowed to love till death?
Where wakeful stars on heaven's bright blue,
  With tender wondering gaze looked on,
And the fair morn, in silver hue,
  'Twixt midnight's rifted clouds outshone?
Oh, no! youth's blighted hopes by thee,
  Like pebbles gathered on the shore,
And cast again into the sea,
  Were left behind for evermore!

NEWTON, 4th May 1886.

——o——

AS UPWARD MOUNTS.

As upward mounts the happy bird,
  The dew-drops from his feathers shaking,
Whose little heart with song is stirred,
  When scarce the eastern sky is breaking;

Or as the pleasant morning sun
  Leaves far behind the shades of even ;
So would I, when my work is done,
  Leave this lone world, and rise to heaven.

For who would wish to linger long,
  Amid the scenes of care and sorrow,
Where from the minstrel's brightest song,
  But little comfort we can borrow ?
Poor souls ! on time's dark ocean tossed,
  O'er sunken reef and quicksands driven,
Until the strong breakwater's crossed,
  There is for us no peaceful haven.

Still let us bravely battle on,
  Nor faint when we in vain have striven,
For yet success our toils may crown,—
  These toils in sorrow oft upgiven.
Then will our feeble faith grow strong,
  And we, instead of shades of even,
Will proudly rise and sing among
  Love's never-setting stars in heaven.

———o———

WE FEEL NOT TILL WE SUFFER.

Dark sorrows cloud full many a hearth,
  When life's most valued joys have fled ;
And angel smiles, and childhood's mirth,
  But live around the early dead.
As oft spring's fairest flowers are reft
  Of all their fragrance and their bloom,
So are those homes where nought is left
  But aching hearts and silent gloom.

When wrathful tempests lash the deep,
  And strew the shore with many a wreck,
And lone hearts for their lost ones weep,
  How little heed of these we take !

But when dire troubles nearer come,
And from the circle dear ones steal,
And leave sad blanks in our sweet home,
For others then we learn to feel.

Oh! let us not refuse to learn
To sympathise with human woe,
Till by some lesson, kind tho' stern,
Life's nobler work we're taught to know.
And when our trusted gourd lies low,
Let's bear in mind the lesson given,
And try some kindly light to throw
O'er lives by sorrows bowed and riven.

How blest is he who stoops and bears
His brother's burden through the brake
Of thorny griefs and bramble cares,
Where robes are torn and sore limbs ache.
On him may choicest blessings fall,
And good men honour long the name
Of him who came at duty's call,
Responsive to the tend'rest claim.

——o——

THE DOG'S DEVOTION

Was suggested by reading of a dog which had followed his master's child, who had strayed a short way from home, and having got on to a line of railway and fallen asleep, was guarded by the dog who stood by his side. But ere long, on came a train—instrument of destruction—and though the driver sounded the alarm whistle, the dog only replied to him by a bark. Again and again was the warning repeated, only with the same result. Who would slacken speed for a dog? Who would rein in his terrible iron horse for a naughty beast like him? But there he stood, beautiful indeed in his self-imposed duty, until both he and his sleeping charge were crushed to death.

Oh! died upon duty! how noble and true!
How bright was thy daring, thy love how sublime!
Surpassed not by any, yea, equalled by few,
Fit subject for sermon, for lecture, and rhyme!

How poor's the devotion that's human to thine!
Before it the doings of heroes grow pale;
The deeds of the bravest, how dimly they shine,
Compared with the sacrifice made on the rail.

The fountain of pity with sorrow o'erflows,—
We marvel, and praise thee, and mourn thy sad end;
Oh! man, then, in future, let kindness, not blows,
Be heaped on our guardian, our helper, and friend.

His days at the longest are brief, very brief,
In court life, or camp life, or life in the cot;
The bright day of gladness, or dark night of grief,
May shine on, or shadow, but alter him not.

Misfortunes may meet us, or friends be unkind,
Nor give to our suff'ring one feeling response;
But still he will greet us, tho' lame and half blind,
With all the attachment so dear to us once.

Fear shakes not his courage, nor weakens his limb,
Mid scenes of disaster and death-shrieks how brave!
The roar of the breakers is music to him,
And into the wild surf he dashes to save.

He turns not from danger, but on without fail,
Thro' smoke, flame, and debris, while men stand aghast;
He follows his master, but ah! what avail,
For bruised there and blackened, lie both at the last.

THE MAID OF ENDRICK SIDE.

By Teith, and Tweed, and Tay, I've been,
Each of its own fair land the pride,
By sylvan vale and hillside green,
Where otters hunt and foxes hide;
And yet in these I have not seen
One maid to match that blooming queen,
The dark-eyed maid of Endrick side.

We've lingered at the gloaming hour,
Amid the beauties of the wood,
Where all conspired, with pleasing power,
To solemnise that solitude;
And there, in summer's fragrant bower,
The nectar drink of love's own flower
Dropt on us from the passing cloud.

And were I in that vale again,
Where Endrick's tranquil waters glide,—
Where I have felt love's mystic pain,
As pure and deep as that clear tide,—
Still would my loyalty disdain
To bless not, as the mountain swain,
The winsome maid of Endrick side.

Newton, 1886.

—o—

BEARING THE CROSS.

Oh! let us calmly bear our cross,
Our Leader's footsteps follow,
Though tears for many a bitter loss
Bedew our midnight pillow.
May we be ready to endure
What we would deem severest,
For those so tried, in spirit poor,
May be to Him the nearest.

When sad reflections stealing come,
Foreboding worse the morrow,
Around the fireside of our home,
With their dark trails of sorrow,
Fear not, lone mourner! to resign
Health, friends, and earthly treasure;
For He who makes the duty thine,
Knows best thy strength to measure.

Were no young lives of promise fair
Lent early to death's keeping,
And no sad trace of blanching care
Told plain night's watch and weeping,
Our spirits ne'er had learned to bow,
Nor felt His love spread o'er us,
Nor known those woes which pierce us now,
For us, He'd borne before us.

Or were our days with pleasures fraught,
And all beneath the heaven
Delicious as ambrosial draught,
By pure immortals given;
We then might hear no Leader's voice,
Nor seek His steps to follow,
Ne'er dreaming that this paradise
Has thorns for every pillow.

—o—

THE SWAIN'S WISH.

Oh! give to me the green-clad hill!
Where flowers in native beauty bloom,
Where wild birds sing, and flocks at will
Through morning's dewy pastures roam.
There stands the gray, time-honoured cairn,
Where fearless men for freedom bled,
Where blooming heath and sober fern
Still fragrant keep the martyr's bed.

Oh ! give to me the summer stream !
With all its windings through the vale,
The fairest thing in childhood's dream,
Loved more than fireside fairy tale.
E'en now I hear its mystic tone,
And see each lonely favourite nook,
And hope and life will both be gone,
When I forget the hillside brook.

Oh ! give to me the man who's true,
Whate'er his name or rank may be,
Whose well-timed life shows thro' and thro',
To all, downright fidelity ;
And think not that such men are few ;
Right royal lives in rough moulds cast,
Where others ne'er their lifework knew,
Unrecognized, have quietly passed.

And Agar's prayer would be mine,
No surplus treasure would I crave,
Nor poverty, lest I repine,
And think not of the good I have.
Oh ! all-wise Good ! should'st thou assign
To me stern want, and anxious days,
Oh ! let thy grace, and love divine,
Give courage still to sing thy praise.

Oh ! give to me the hope which bears
The fainting spirit up in death,
The steadfast faith, which nothing fears,
When nature yields her final breath ;
A soul to grasp, without a doubt,
Th' unchanging promises of love,
And rise when life's frail lamp is out,
To perfect happiness above.

——o——

TO THE MEMORY OF MY DEAR DEPARTED FATHER.

Oft while I, musing, lie upon my bed,
Sad mem'ry wanders thro' the silent past,
For she would still recall the honoured dead,
O'er whom the hand of time no shade has cast;
For filial love, like faith, sees the unseen,
And keeps thy virtues, father! ever green.

Well I remember how ye nobly bore,
In silence, all for us, when we were young,
Long toilsome days, and still my heart is sore
When I review them, and my soul is wrung
With fruitless grief; but, oh! there still is one
Sweet thought for me,—of sorrow thou hast none.

There was a sweet consistency, which ran
Like thread of gold throughout thy long career,
An atmosphere of peace hung round the man,
Which made our home a royal dwelling here;
That homely beauty, with fair virtue blent,
Give spirit, life, and light to true content.

Humble and earnest, and devout always,
Full of deep rev'rence for the one Supreme,
Cheerful and patient 'mid life's shortening days,
Thy confidence was centred all in Him:
Though press'd with poverty, there ne'er was heard
From thee one sinful, Heaven-accusing word.

Peace was thy motto, and at early day
The solemn messenger, with angel band,
Leaving behind thy sacred worn-out clay,
Bore thy freed spirit to the peaceful land,
Where from the throne of God, as crystal clear,
Flow streams of joy, no lips e'er tasted here.

And now, like lonely sentinel I stand,
Gazing from off time's shore, across the stream,
To that fair clime by summer breezes fanned;
And oft in fancy's light, as in a dream,
I picture to myself a home of bliss,
Free of the care and solitude of this.

NEWTON, May 14th 1886.

—o—

IN DEEP WATERS.

NE'ER be the sinful spirit mine, who'd find
Why dread Omnipotence should now perform
Things hard to know! as if man's finite mind
Could comprehend the infinite; poor worm!
Proud reason blunders when she tries to lift
The veil from the invisible, and sound
Depths only to be fathomed when we drift
Into that boundless sea which lies beyond.

A wilder tempest far than ocean knows,
When all its crested waves are white with foam,
Sweeps round our troubled spirits, when we lose
Hold of hope's anchor, and the chart of home.
Ah! there are other nights than those which come
When day retires, till sleep renews our powers;
A darkness, worse than dark night's drearest gloom,
Is that which falls upon our waking hours.

Lo! see the nursling of the lonely wild,
Beside his flocks, upon the summer wold,
Conning the story of that wondrous Child,
In lays of ancient prophet-bards foretold.
Pure is the faith and quietude which fills
His soul, and regulates his simple life,
Still primitive as the unchanging hills,
Free from the curse of truth-distorting strife.

Plain, guileless rustic! at that living stream
Thy fathers did their spirits' thirst allay,
And thou would'st feel a culprit, did'st thou deem
Thyself more wise or prudent than were they.
God grant that in the wreck of this frail dust
There may abide in me, unscathed, the faith
That questions not, but childlike loves to trust
Thy word, sure passport thro' the realms of death!

When round my prostrate form, in mournful guise,
My loved ones stand distress'd at my distress,
O Love unbounded! let me realise
The sympathy of thine almightiness.
O Father! I am sinking, and I crave
One touch at least of thy soft hand to feel;
Well is it, if thou touchest but to save,
And wound me only that thou would'st me heal.

NEWTON, March 1886.

—o—

LINES SUGGESTED

By pulling a sprig of heather to my daughter Bella, August 1881.

O LOVELY flower! in very truth
Thou bring'st me back the days of youth.
I ne'er can see thy tiny form,
And fail to feel that wondrous charm,
That joy more deep than magic spell,
Brought into play by thy sweet bell.
But, ah! I lack the happy play,
The poet's power, the energy,
To sing thy praise in fitting lay.

Around thee still, thou fragile thing,
My young life's purest feelings cling:
Lo! what a host of mem'ries come
With thee from that old mountain home!

The mingled past comes up anew,
Scene after scene, in swift review,
Pass by me as I stand and gaze
Upon the flower of other days:
Again I hear the mountain brook
Tinkling by many a lonely nook;
And, starting from his heathery bed,
Up through the mist-cloud high o'erhead,
With dew-wet crest, and willing wing,
The mountain minstrel soars to sing.

I see thee on the lone hillside,
The shepherd's badge, old Scotia's pride,
A little, modest, purple bloom,
Away from guile and grief and gloom,
Meet flower to deck the martyr's tomb.

I love thee when, with summer joy,
With nought to harm me or annoy,
I sported on the flowery wild,
A simple, happy, heedless child;
And now, tho' old, and bent, and gray,
Worn toiler on life's uphill way,
No matter where I chance to rove,
By brake or bush, by field or grove,
Thou art the flower to claim my love;
So dear, so knit unto my heart,
Of my own life thou seem'st a part.

I may not tell what I have borne,
Since first in youth's untarnished morn,
Amid that world of gorgeous bloom,
All odorous with thy perfume,
With tattered robes and hair unkempt,
From dread of coming ills exempt,
I lay, or ran, or whiled away
Those happy days in childish play.

And when I feel that I have grown,
In this bleak world, all but unknown,
A stranger in the countless mass
Who come and go like blades of grass;
From thee, sweet flower, may I not learn
To lay aside undue concern,
And trust that One who stoops to care
For things so little everywhere;
Yea, feel that in his loving heart
I have a sure, allotted part;
And that no fate, howe'er unkind,
Can alter the eternal mind,
Nor weary length of years make less
His ever-watchful tenderness.

——o——

TO MARY.

(BY THE DARNOE BRIDGE.)

In the summer of 1884, being very much worn out by long weakness, and being only able to take a short walk supported by a staff in each hand, a little before sunset, accompanied by Mary, my youngest child, then about three years of age, who would in no wise be left behind, we usually, if I was not too much exhausted, walked west about a quarter of a mile to a small stream, called the Darnoe Burn. Nothing could better please Mary, than to stand on the bridge and gaze with all a child's delight upon the water running past, and upon the pool underneath. What was to the child a source of unbounded pleasure was to me a positive pain; her world was the present, mine was the irrevocable past, and the mighty untrodden future.

AH! thou wilt soon forget
Those quiet walks we took
With Don, so glossy jet,
West to the summer brook;
Amazed wast thou to see,
Down in the shining pool,
Another child like thee,
Oh! it was wonderful.

Thine eyes of harebell blue,
And sunny, flaxen hair,
Seemed gazing on us two,
From out the streamlet there ;
With summer music rife,
And bright with silver beam,
The journey of thy life
Is mirrored in that stream.

But gathering breadth and pace,
From many a trickling rill,
It flows with winning grace,
And murm'rings musical,
Right o'er the waterfall,
Down by the grot and cell,
By lordly mansion hall,
And through the dingy dell.

It hears the cushat's note,
Hid in the aged spruce,
Beside the woodman's cot,
Like home of stern recluse.
The little flowers, which hide
Among the moss and grass
Upon its spray-wet side,
Look up to see it pass.

Oft have I heard its song
At morning, noon, and night,
When younger, and more strong,
And better knit for fight ;
When hope shone bright above
Our quiet rural home,
Where look and lip spoke love,
And sorrows had not come.

Oh ! it doth image true
This dreamlike life of mine,
My days so short and few,
A little more than thine ;

For like one fleeting year
My mingled life has passed,
And age, once in the rear,
Is in the front at last.

Away ! away it goes !
On ! ever on in haste !
No leisure time it knows,
It knows no place of rest ;
Like one in hot pursuit
Of something still unfound,
It gives but one salute,
Nor halts till we respond.

——o——

TO MARY.

Come, tell me now, my fairy love,
Oh ! say do ye remember still,
When bright the sun shone right above
Yon distant wood-encircled hill ?
And how a parting glance he threw,
Like one who says a kind Good night,
Or friend who waves a last adieu,
Ere he descends the last seen height.

How grand and green the old hills shone,
Touched by the evening's fading glow,
And solemn came the curfew's tone
Up o'er the woods and marshes low.
Sad is that past, and dark and drear,
Which has enshrined no happy smile,
Nor kindly deed our hearts to cheer,
In times of sorrow or of toil.

Dear were to me those walks of ours,
Along our own thorn-guarded road,
Or through the fields among the flowers,
Upon the cool, refreshing sod ;

Fair grew thy little fav'rite flower
Away beside the corn-field fence,
The emblem of thy young life's dower,
The daisy—type of innocence.

When by the wood the evening mist
Crept slowly up the streamlet's brink,
And weary flowers looked athirst,
The cooling soft night dews to drink ;
How bright the lark rung out betimes
Those strains no purer poet knows,
Which heavenward, like vesper chimes,
And sweet as evening incense, rose.

Oh ! were I filled with living fire,
And deep with poet's ardour stirred,
I'd praise on the immortal lyre
That happy, peerless, poor man's bird.
Like him I'd soar in song sublime,
With thoughts in fittest language dressed,
I'd thrill the soul with glowing rhyme,
And sing to it and thee of rest.

Rest ! 'tis not dug from learning's mine,
Nor found in deeds of noble aim,
Nor do we see its lustre shine
Upon the laureled brow of fame ;
The sable robe and costly gem,
The round of pleasures ever new,
The post of power, the diadem,
Is but the mirage,—all untrue.

Oh ! there is music in that word,
A melody akin to home,
A fragrance as when flowers are stirred,
Rich with the flush of summer bloom.
It fills the soul with hope and peace,
When heavy sorrows strike it dumb,
And sings of joys which never cease,
When God's own promised rest has come.

NEWTON, 1885.

INSECT LIFE PRESERVATION,

And transformation, a proof of God's goodness and power, and comfort to the believer.

SEE how the piercing north wind spares,
Nor leaves the dormant insect dead,
Displaying how our Father cares
For every creature he has made.
The winter rages, but in vain,
When all around the tempests sweep,
The searching drift and dashing rain,
Unbroken is the insect's sleep.
Helpless, but safe, in that long gloom,
It waits till the fair hand of spring
Has robed the earth in floral bloom,
And gladdened every living thing.

Come, see the chrysalis, which lies
'Mong leaves and mould,—stern winter proof;
Or, yielding to each breath, it flies,
Like cobweb hanging from the roof;
And who would dream that dead-like thing,
By cottage roof or leafy mould,
Could living form, and painted wing,
In its hard, withered case enfold.
Yet so it is, though scoffing man
Looks on with cold, irreverent eye,
Nor sees in that one perfect plan
A type of his own destiny.

True, in the cold, decaying dust,
No vivifying power is seen,
Yet faith the sacred page can trust,
And rest upon the truth therein.
The seed the sower casts abroad,
Ere it repeats itself, must die;
So may the dead and senseless clod
Regain its lost vitality.

We know we are for nobler ends,
Though mystery shades the full extent,
And he alone is wise who bends
To God, with His plain word content.

——o——

TO BRIGHTEN LIFE, DO WHAT WE CAN.

'Tis not in fancy's mirthful jest,
Nor yet her fascinating strain,
But to allay life's strange unrest,
I sing these snatches, pure and plain.

I cannot boast the poet's gift,
Which wields with power sublimest thought,
Nor yet the love which lives to lift
Men up, where purer life is caught.

I love the calm, the kindly speech,
The truth which scorns to wear disguise:
These, like the sunbeams, where they reach,
Each honest heart will dearly prize.

I may not be a perfumed vase,
Spreading my fragrance far and wide,
Yet sweetening in a thousand ways
Each life around "our ain fireside;"

Nor yet a rare, engaging flower,
Courting the florist's grateful smile,
But proud to bloom in cottage bower,
Life's dreary moments to beguile.

I may not be a joyous bird,
Soaring above the mountain brow,
Yet pleased to sing, if only heard,
Where hearts are sore and breaking now.

I may not be yon lustrous light,
To earth and sky a gift divine,
Still, like the glowworm in the night,
In thickest darkness brightest shine,

Pleased only if one solitude
Were gladdened with my notes of love,
And gave response, as does the wood,
When Philomel sings in the grove.

I love to sing, and seem to live
Nursed by the power which song imparts;
Sing, then, ye minstrels, who can give
Life, love, and joy to drooping hearts.

NEWTON, June 1886.

POEMS IN SCOTCH.

April—June 1886.

TO THE READER.

KIND reader! your forbearance wad I crave,
When I presume afore the warl' to sing:
Nae eagle flicht my varied subjects have,
Sma' share o' pith an' true poetic ring;

Nae pawky wit to gie a sly side-stroke,
As if such thing had ne'er been meant ava,
An' that rich drollery which weel can joke,
Although the true improvement be but sma'.

But if in droopin' age an' high-souled youth,
They strike wi' power some fine respondin' chord,
'Twill prove at least they hae a shade o' truth,
Some hamely counsel, or some prudent word.

A secret joy is ours when we succeed,
For human nature worships true success;
Who shuns applause when worthy o' the mead,
Or for his struggles loves the poet less?

NEWTON, May 1886.

TO MY AIN GUIDWIFE.

[In the month o' April '85, juist the nicht afore the examination, oor laddie Bob, bein' gey an' ill aff for a bit jacket, my ain guidwife began to think within hersel' that she wad like to see him something like the lave o' our faimly, as she considered him as deservin', bein' in my e'en nae doot (whether in hers or no), just as weel faured. Sure aneuch he wad appear sae to me, bein' the laddie whilk was kirsen'd after me. Sae, to mak him appear in as passable an outfit as we cud, when the clud o' nicht was fa'en, an' a' the doors were steekit, she began wi' her sheers to mak' frae an auld swallow tailed coat a new jacket. Sae, after havin' finished the mony seamed garment, in the quiet dawn o' the spring mornin', I chanced to leuk up frae a bit troubled snoose, and leukin' to the fireside, what, think you, did I see? Just my ain guidwife happet wi' ane o' my auld cloaks (for atweel I haena got a new ane), an' there she sat afore the fire, noddin' an' dozin'. An' being touched by the waefu' picture, an' reflectin', maybe owre muckle, on our needy an' helpless condition, I scribbled doon the following lines.]

I NEVER dreamed when I had made ye
My ain guidwife, I only wed ye
To slave wi' needle, thread, an preen,
An' sit wi' sheers, an' shapes o' paper,
An tapeline, 'side the midnicht taper,
To work nicht oot, an' mornin' in.

I canna see, tho' much I hope it,
How we wad fen, were ye to drop it,
Nor mair the midnicht toil begin;
For sair's the fecht, an' hard the scrapin'
To get our sowp, an' bite, an' happin',
An' keep want oot, an bein folks in.

But we wad cheerfu' bear the burden,
Nor let oor hearts wi' trials harden,
Nor fash oorsels 'bout fortune's frown;
For sometimes wealth is not in riches,
An' delvin' yairds, an' scourin' ditches,
Will bring mair pleasure than a crown.

Fu' weel we ken, an' never question,
The nicht was gien for man to rest in,
An' nae to shape, or caird, or spin;
But this we hae to min', an' note aye,
What my auld grannie used to gote * aye,
"The naked man wi' need maun rin."

It nips me sair to see you dozin',
When daylicht's keekin' thro the lozen,
An' stars are growin' few aboon;
When here an' there the cocks are crawin',
An' hinds to stable yairds are drawin',
Wi' claes a' lowse, an' half-laced shoon.

Oh! mony a sad an' weakly mither,
Wi scanty means, an' painfu' swither,
When nane but God cud see her greet,
Through lang drear nichts has sairly striven,
For luve still maks this life worth livin',
An' try to gar a' ends to meet.

Wi' mony things your brains are wracket,
Twice waur to richt than mak' a jacket
For the fair scion o' the hoose;
To get a scone or bannock baket,
When box an' barrel are clean raket,
Nor ae kurn left to feed a moose.

Ah! there's the puzzle! clever woman,
Ye wha 'mang plenty are kept soomin',
Owre apt to think a' ithers fou,
In your ripe judgment harsh an' hasty,
The ane wha wants maun surely waste aye,
Or stuff the big pairt in her mou'.

But wait a wee; gin we could live on,
Like butterflees, the air o' heaven,
Or gaither manna roun' the door,
Then micht we look as croose as ony,
An' auld close-fisted uncle Johnny
Keep to himsel' his idol store.

* To impress upon one; *Jamieson,* to drive into a trench.

But juist as men, ance hale an' ruddy,
When owre hard plied wi' toil an study,
In manhood's prime grow pale an' thin;
Sae I jaloose, an' muckle fear it,
Though a' alang ye wadna hear it,
Ye'll wear youth oot, an' auld age in.

I wadna like to see ye lazy,
But clean an' trig aye as a daisy,
An' ruddy as the heather bloom;
Aye hopefu', mid oor care an' sorrow,
An' seein' aye a cheerfu' morrow
Bricht painted on ilk nicht o' gloom.

April 1886.

—o—

LADY WI' THE AUBURN LOCKS.

Sweet lady wi' the auburn locks,
Wilt thou nae smile on me?
But I hae neither land nor flocks,
Nocht but true love for thee.

Come, walk within the hazel dell,
When the calm gloamin' fa's;
My waes to thee I needna tell,
For weel thou kenn'st the cause.

Had I been born a prince's son,
A titled lord or thane,
Thy virgin love I micht hae won,
And claimed thee for my ain.

Though fortune had nocht else to gie,
But love and daily toil,
Hard toil wad be nae thocht to me
Did'st thou but deign to smile.

May 1886.

GIE A LITTLE, RATHER THAN PREACH OWRE MEIKLE.

Oh ! pious God's servants, is this your religion ?
Begrudgin' your brither, aye stoopit an' puir,
What three times as meikle the mou' o' a pigeon
Would haud without hurt, an' a gey hantle mair.

How far frae the charity Paul sae commended !
Unlike the gude stranger, wha helped the waylaid!
In life's sternest duties maist mercy is blended,
An' diff'rence o' creeds, tae, are sunk in the shade.

My song has a chorus, 'tis heard in the weepin'
O' mony a ragged an' blate hungry wean,
When hameless an' weary, his scant duds a' dreepin',
In nicht dark an' eerie, wi' cauld, sleet, and rain.

That chorus, unhaltin', the clock keeps repeatin',
An' oh ! it is brandin' it deep on my brain ;
Anon in the silence my sad heart is beatin',
In audible language, the same waefu' strain.

Ah ! yes, that sad chorus is wrestin' an' burnin'
A' life frae my being, an' love frae my heart ;
O merciful Heaven ! I wadna be spurnin',
But struggle to bear it, didst thou shoot the dart.

Come, show me, my brithers, what guid's in your preachin',
Gin ye be in practice unchristian an' stern ;
Adieu to your sermons, your prayers an' teachin',
Wha do not what ye wad hae ithers to learn.

12th May 1886.

——o——

THE SIMMER BROOK.

Now wad I sing the simmer brook,
For aft its sang was sung to me,
Lang ere I bore the shepherd's crook,
Or herded crummie on the lea;

Ere I had donn'd the male attire,
Or doff'd the female's drugget frock,
And when, like pious monk or friar,
I wore the shepherd's tartan cloak;

Ere like a little hardy man,
Wi' worthy Bob, then auld an' dune,
Alang the march burnside we ran,
To turn the flocks at simmer noon.

Bob was a ready, trusty dog,
A kindly beast, yet lik'd a stir;
Strong in his prime, a knowing rogue,
An' weel could dress a growlin' cur.

Though I'm nae moralist or priest,
Yet after forty changeful years,
When thinkin' o' that faithfu' beast,
I hardly can refrain frae tears.

Ance mair I rin wi' joyfu' whoop,
Barefittet thro' the Lammas rain,
And on the brooklet sail my sloop,
Built withoot either pitch or plane.

Though now wi' age an' troubles hemm'd,
I hear it sughin' by the door,
The first an' best, to me begemmed
Wi' beauty fairer than of yore.

Oh ! 'tis a sacred thing that stream,
It flows thro' mem'ry's flowerless waste
An' lichts wi' its maist heavenly gleam
The still drear shadows o' the past.

It leads me back to ither days,
An' brings me thochts o' auld lang syne,
An' sings, as round ilk turn it plays,
A sang my auld heart winna tine.

And as it sings, life's sweetest chimes
Are blendin' in its muirland sang,
Awaking those old treasured rhymes
Which in youth's golden morning rang.

An' mony a warlock heather knowe,
An' flowery bank, an' ferny brae,
An bonny cleughs where hazels grow,
Smile on it in its joyous way.

Return again, ye vanished joys,
Delights my wonderin' boyhood knew,
When in that brook the simmer skies
Were mirrored aye sae sweet an' true.

For now the sun is sinking low,
An' lang the e'enin' shadows look ;
An' mair impressive each day grow
The oft heard murm'rin's o' the brook.

Fareweel ! thou art nae fabled theme,
Nae coinage o' the poet's brain,
An' will, while reason reigns supreme,
The first an' best to me remain !

May 1886.

——o——

THE SICK MAN'S ADDRESS TO A BOUQUET OF FLOWERS.

How poor is the heart which has felt nae joy,
Sae subtle an' fine, sae tender an' coy,
Wi' a hold so deep on its finer chords,
Eludin' a' power to be told in words.
E'en such is the joy which has come wi' you,
An' a' the mair prized because it is new,
An' though such a pleasure I'll ne'er define,
'Tis fully enough to know it is mine.

I longed for the bird, an' the brook, an' bower,
For the hillside air an' the wee wild flower;
For the long loved scene, an' the tranquil spot,
Where the world's sad turmoil cometh not.
Then ye came like the poet's newborn thought,
A' fresh as the dew frae the mornin' caught,
Wi' your chaste sweet bloom, an' your winnin' grace,
To refill in my heart the vacant place.

Alas! but ye fade! in your every leaf
I can trace the span o' my years sae brief;
An I mourn to think that the gift o' June
Should not live out the age o' one short moon.
Ye brocht a' the simmer that I hae seen,
In your yellow bloom, an' your white an' green;
An' mair o' the simmer I may not see,
Oh! then let its smile still abide wi' me.

For why should ye pass, like each valued thing,
Wi' the silent speed o' the swallow's wing,
Or the lovely gem in the vale untrod,
Which adorns, then dies on, the autumn sod;
For a mission ye have, ye "stars of earth,"
To the sad in heart who can know no mirth:
Ye come with a balm, like the tones o' love,
Which are born beneath for a life above.

June 1886.

*MISS H.'S EULOGIUM ON HER LITTLE FAITHFUL FAVOURITE, KURI.**

If men admire a daring deed,
  Unselfishly and nobly done,
And honestly bestow the meed,
  Though all unsought, while truly won ;
Wad I begrudge a line o' praise
  To Kuri, aye sae frank an' kind,
Whase clever tricks an' winnin' ways
  Were proofs conclusive o' his mind.

If dog an' hare, an' moose an' mare,
  Were by immortal Burns addressed,
An' pleadin' look, dumb nature's prayer,
  A true response found in his breast ;
If to the fowls he chanced to scare
  Amang the wilds o' Ochtertyre,
His feelin' muse a verse could spare,
  Fu' o' the heart's humanest fire ;

Need I be silenced by the fear
  O' sentimental critic's grane,
Or dread the wad-be critic's sneer,
  Wha neither teach nor let alane ?
Weel worthy praise did Kuri prove,
  For he was faithfu', wise, an' brave,
A' in the household shared his love ;
  If slichts he got, nae slicht he gave.

Though his micht be a foreign name,
  He was a Scottish doggie true,
An' a' micht ken frae whar he came,
  Wi's shaggy coat an' hairy mou' ;
An' my best frien's wad little tine,
  Were they compared wi' this wee pet ;
Oh ! faithfu' beast ! this heart o' mine
  Felt at the partin' much regret.

* A sky terrier : the name is Maori for *dog*.

A gleesome life ! wi' frolic wud,
He'd scamper o'er the simmer plain,
Where pussy frae her clap wad scud,
Wi' backward look, in high disdain ;
'Lang winter roads, in bick'rin' haste,
Through dirt an' dub, withouten tire,
He'd splutter on, richt mettle beast,
A leevin' ba' o' weet an' mire.

Nane wad hae thocht his wee bit croon
Had in 't ae grain o' doggie sense,
But ilka hang-dog gang'ral loon
Gat frae him unco little mense ;
For he had something in his pate,
A dog o' breedin' an guid taste,
Nae mongrel cur, whase cooard gait,
Is proof the wretch cud rob a ruist.

A trusty watch, nae lazy lout,
Prood o' the post we did assign,
He greeted a' wi' due salute,
A warnin' bark or friendly whine ;
Though stern on duty, an' sae croose,
An' birsin' up to ither tykes,
He ne'er was kenn'd to kill a moose :
A gentle beast, wi' few dislikes.

Though only twa three days at schule,
O' nouns an' verbs he had nae sense,
Yet gat an inklin' o' the rule,
Includin' past an' present tense ; *
An' o' the kirk still less he knew,
But ance, when feelin' rather grave,
He thither went, whaur in the pew
He tried the singin' wi' the lave ;

* When young, he was a few days in the shepherd's house for training; and ever after, remembering the taste of discipline, he would not come near, but carefully avoided it.

But socht nae mair the sacred place,
As he believed nae in the tunes.
Man thinks his Maker's name to praise
Aft wi' a string o' unfelt soun's,
Of pathos void; they canna breathe
That sough, soul-stirrin' an' sublime,
Auld Scotia's sons, 'mang Scotia's heath,
Poured grandly forth in Claverse' time.

But noo that breast, sae fu' o' glee,
Is still at last, ay, still an' cold,
And 'neath the aged wa'nut tree
Lies saftly 'mang the kindly mould.
Then gently smooth his little grave,
An' plant the sweetest flowers thereon;
His virtues all to us he gave,
As for his vices, he had none.

June 5th, '86.

——o——

SING! TO POETS OF THE MINE.

SING on! wi' labour's dust begrimmed,
Brave workers in the dreary mine;
Wi' youth an' hope your lamps are trimmed,
Oh! sing, then, while thus bricht they shine.

Sing! tho' the bricht sun far aboon
Ne'er glint upon ye at your toil;
Nor twinklin' star, nor silver moon,
Smile on your labour a' the while.

There's aye for you the kindly lift,
To bring ye to the world again;
An' the returnin' welcome shift,
Whereby the day frae nicht ye ken.

Sing ! an' be thankfu' tho' the strain
Be but a common ilk-day thing ;
Ye winna tune your lyres in vain,
If in a proper frame ye sing.

They werena gi'en to grace the wa',
Nor basely praise the worthless great,
But gi'en to let their solace fa'
Upon the poor an' desolate.

Ne'er think the dust, an' cleedin' plain,
Will e'er your cherished honour tine,
But bring to a' a priceless gain,
While Scots can sing o' "Auld langsyne."

June 1886.

——o——

LINES ON ROBERT NICOLL,

"SCOTLAND'S SECOND BURNS."

IF talent equalled the regard
I bear this unaffected bard,
Then wad I bring
A kind remembrancer o' him,
Who, when he herded by the stream,
First learned to sing.

Pure was his liltin' as the air,
Which played amang his laddie hair,
An' sweet forby,
Sweet as the flowers which grew a' roun',
Bricht wi' the sunny licht o' June,
Or calm July.

An' happy as the birdies' lay,
Sung when the mornin' still is gray
Upon the hill,
Or when the peaceful gloamin' hour
Creeps saftly round the lover's bower,
Where a' is still.

I love his hamely, tender strain,
Fu' o' a beauty stown frae nane,
But nature wild;
For a' conspired in her domain
To win the muse's amorous swain,
When simmer smiled.

An' as the burnie rowed alang,
Doubtless he gathered frae its sang
New melodies;
For if one ear could hear therein
Ought but a minglin' o' strange din,
That ear was his.

From these he caught that living fire,
Which shone around his Scottish lyre;
An' thro' a' time,
Where Scotchmen sing, an' Scotch hearts ache,
His touching piety will make
His verse sublime.

June 1886.

—o—

LINES ON THE SAME.

Oh! gentle son o' deathless fame,
I hear the stream without a name
Sing by each nook;
The "Auld Ha' Bible" still is dear,
An' lang may Scottish faith revere
Oor faither's book.

Oh ! tine it not, whoe'er thou art,
Else, like the seaman without chart,
Where wilt thou drift ?
Wi' anchor lost, an' compass gone,
To certain wreck thou'lt hurry on,
On,—oh ! how swift.

The time has come when thou must work,
Oft from the dawn to dreary mirk,
Wi' sad, sick heart ;
Yea, when the still an' solemn night
Sheds over earth her soothing light,
Still there thou art !

I see thee busy in thy chair,
Each morn beholds thee wasted mair,
An' droopin' fast,
Wi' weary look an' joyless smile ;
Ilk day renews the wastin' toil,
Till comes the last.

Doubtless the last, to us, sad day,
When thou wert "weakened by the way,"
Was hailed by thee ;
Yea, welcomed mair than when each tongue
Loud praised the bard, when thou hadst sung
O' "Bessie Lee."

Thy Scottish hame lies far ahead,
Roun' which again thou ne'er wilt tread,
Nor ever see ;
Friends weep aroun' thy wayside bed,
But, hush ! the minstrel's soul has fled,
An' he is free.

An' men outpour their strains o' grief,
To mourn a life sae pure an' brief,
As for a friend ;
But tho' to us his earthly span,
Like lightning round its circuit ran,
Who sees the end ?

What though the angel's dusky wing
Flapp'd owre him in the early spring,
His time was come ;
An' He who is the "First an' Last,"
Who rules the future an' the past,
Has called him home.

June 12th, 1886.

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